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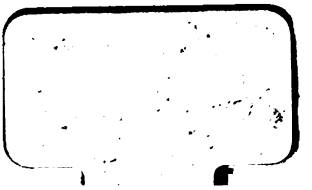

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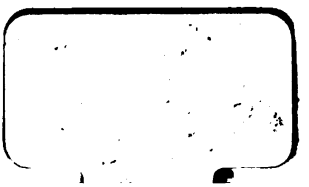

THE MEMBER FOR PARIS:

A TALE OF THE SECOND EMPIRE.

BY

TROIS-ETOILES.

"A force de marcher l'homme erre, l'esprit doute,
Tous laissent quelquechose aux buissons de la route,
Les troupeaux leur toison et l'homme sa vertu."—VICTOR HUGO.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE MEMBER FOR PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

CE FUT UN DEUIL DANS LE PAYS.

HAUTBOURG on the Loire is a venerable old town, which played an important part in French history some six or seven hundred years ago, when gentlemen wore plate-armour and cut each other's throats by way of pastime. If we may trust the legend, it originally formed part of the fief of a mighty Count Alaric, who, being a disloyal subject and in league with the devil, thrashed his king, Louis le Gros, in a field adjoining the town, which Providence and the municipal council between them have since appointed for a brick-kiln. If you turn to Froissart you will find that a Count

de Hautbourg fought behind John II. at Poictiers, and was in the train of that ill-starred monarch when he rode through London on a tall horse, having his vanquisher, the Black Prince, beside him on a small one. Three centuries and a half later another Count de Hautbourg turned up in the Bastille, where he had been put for being a Jansenist; and in 1793 a certain Raoul-Aimé, Marquis of Hautbourg and Clairefontaine, was heard of on the guillotine, where he perished, it seems, with remarkable good grace and equanimity. I am not going to weary you with a long account of what the Hautbourgs did in exile during the Republic and the reign of Napoleon; but if you are versed in contemporary history you must have read all about that Marquis of H. and C., who accompanied Louis XVIII. to Hartwell, married in England Mary-Anne Sophia, daughter of Ezekiel Guineaman, Esquire, and died, under the Restoration, a duke, a peer of France, and a secretary of state. To him succeeded his eldest son, who was also a peer of France, but never a minister, and who figured as

one of the leaders of that "anti-dynastic" opposition, which made the life of poor Louis Philippe so extremely unpleasant to him. This nobleman being in Paris, in 1851, at the time when Monsieur Bonaparte, as he called him, effected his *coup-d'état*, was so unfortunate as to take a walk in the afternoon of the 3rd December, at the precise moment when the emissaries of the said Monsieur B. were most intent upon their work. Finding himself suddenly face to face with a troop of M. de Goyon's horse, whose mission it was to clear the streets, he made an attempt to fly—the first attempt of the kind, be it said incidentally, that he had ever made in his life. But well-mounted dragoons are not always so easy to fly from. You will remember that on this occasion the brave defenders of order had been liberally plied with wine, and had received instructions not to spare anybody who stood in their way. These instructions they obeyed; and so it befell that the noble scion of the Hautbourgs, who entertained about the same feelings towards democracy as he did towards

pitch, came, thanks to the grim irony of fate, by the death of a democrat. For, when the slain were picked up on the evening of that glorious day which slew a republic and founded a dynasty, the Legitimist duke was found lying side by side with a subversive sweep, a costermonger of socialist tendencies, and a small boy, three foot high, who must have been wicked beyond his years, seeing that out of his bleeding, perverse little hand was snatched a red toy-flag emblazoned with the heinous words, *Vive la Liberté!*

Some three years after this, that is, in the year 1854, the time at which this narrative commences, the domain and castle of Clairefontaine, about two miles distant from Hautbourg, had not yet been visited by their new master. The estate, which during five-and-thirty years had teemed with splendour, animation, and festivity, now looked as if a sudden blight had fallen upon it. Grass had begun to sprout over the stately avenue, a good mile long, which led from the lodge-gates of the manor-house to its principal entrance. The shutters of the castle were all closed and barred. The

stables, in which the last Duke of Hautbourg had stalled six-and-twenty horses, were deserted. The handsome little Gothic chapel, one of the sights of the country, in which it was reported that Fénélon had once preached, and in which it was a certified fact that his Majesty King Charles X. had been several times to mass during the visit he paid to the first Duke in 1827, was become a home for spiders; and—worse sign than all—the monumental fountain standing in the centre of the state court-yard—fountain built on the designs of the famous sculptor Pierre Puget, and covering a spring from which the manor drew its name of Clairefontaine—was overgrown with moss, thus revealing that its dolphins and naiads had long ceased to dash spray out of their open mouths and horned conchs into the porphyry basin under them. Had it not been for the unsightly ruins of an unfinished summer-house, which had evidently been begun in the late Duke's time, and abandoned to the mercies of wind and rain at his death, one would have fancied it was full a hundred years since anybody had trod those leaf-strewn alleys

and silent chambers. Now and then in the very early morning, or in the evening towards sunset, an old crone was to be seen painfully mowing with a hand-sickle the long grass on the lawn, or gathering peaches, apricots, and cherries in the orchard, or picking lapfuls of roses and pinks from what had once been the flower-garden; but she partook more of the phantom than of the human being. If questioned, she would tell you that she was the lodge-keeper, and that she gathered the fruit and flowers to prevent them being wasted. She was a rather dismal old woman, with a querulous intonation of voice, but—like all French people of either sex—she was ready enough to talk, and would spin her quavering yarns by the hour when interrogated civilly. "She had no idea," she said, "when the new Duke was coming; she believed he lived in foreign parts. Somebody had told her that he was an odd gentleman—not mad, Monsieur, she didn't mean that, but queer-like in his ways. No one had ever seen him at Clairefontaine since he was a little bit of a boy just so high; no, he hadn't even come to M. le Duc's

funeral, which was thought strange and had made folks about the country talk a little, though our Holy Virgin forbid that she should find anything to say concerning a gentleman who was a Hautbourg and certainly had good reasons for all he did. But you see, sir, despite her being an old woman, she couldn't help hearing what people said, and them as talked said that Monsieur the new Duke had not been very well off before, and that it was peculiar he shouldn't have come to the burial of a relation whose death had brought him a million francs a year. Ay, Monsieur, it was full a million, if not more. All the land from Hautbourg to Clairefontaine, from Clairefontaine to Boisfroment and Clairebourg, and from Clairebourg to Sainte-Sophie, belonged to the estate. To judge of the size one should have seen all the tenants assembled, some three or four hundred, on horseback, as she had seen them when Monseigneur the late Duke came of age, and when 'Monsieur le Roi Charles Dix' arrived on a visit with Monsieur le Duc d'Angoulême and Monseigneur le Duc de Quelen, Archbishop of Paris. Ah, that

was a sight to see, that was! but, mon Dieu, those times were far gone, and men were no longer now what they were then. In those days she was a young woman, and her husband, who was head gamekeeper, had loaded his Majesty's own gun when there was a battue in the preserves. He was paralyzed now, her husband, but he had been 'a brave;' he had served as sergeant in the Prince of Condé's army at Coblentz along with the first Duke, who was Marquis then; and he had lived in Monseigneur's household upwards of forty years. There was no head gamekeeper now, in fact no gamekeeper at all, and the estate was managed by a new agent, M. Claude." Was he a kind man, this Monsieur Claude?—"Oh, yes, sir; she couldn't but say he was kind enough; he was a quiet-spoken gentleman from Paris, and never hard to the tenants. But, after all, Monsieur—" and here the old woman's voice would wax more querulous and whimpering—"it wasn't the same as having M. le Duc here. The country had been all dead like for the last three years, and she had heard tell that if this went on much longer half

the folks up at the town yonder would be ruined. You see, sir, they used to live on Monseigneur, they did, and the new Duke's keeping away was no more nor less than taking the bread out of their mouths."

This account, gloomy and piteous as it might sound, was yet cheerful in comparison to what one heard in the town itself. There the closing of the Château of Clairefontaine and the protracted absence of the new Duke were viewed as public calamities; and one had only to walk along the tortuous old streets and mark the dejected faces of the shopkeepers, to guess that unless M. le Duc put in an appearance very shortly the old woman's prediction about the *gazette* was not unlikely to be realized. As we said at starting, Hautbourg was a venerable town, but it had had its day, and it could no longer afford to do without patronage. On each side of the main-street, which was called *La Rue de Clairefontaine*, the sign-boards and devices over the shops (for sign-boards are as much in vogue in French provincial towns as they were in England 150 years ago) testified abundantly that, spite of revolutions and noble

principles of equality, the relations between borough and manor-house were as feudal as they had ever been at the best of times. Over the crockery-dealer's was the picture of a young person standing beside a bubbling fountain and handing a mugful of water to a knight in plate-armour, with underneath the words: *Au Chevalier de la Claire fontaine.* Over the ironmonger's was another knight in plate-armour, dispensing what appeared to be shovels and tongs to his menials, and exhorting them to be "*toujours prêts*," which was the motto of the Hautbourgs. Over the pork-butcher's was a Hautbourg slaying a wild-boar; over the gunsmith's a fourth Hautbourg firing off a culverin, and so on. Of course the chief inn was the Hôtel de Clairefontaine, and its rival over the way the Hôtel Monseigneur; and equally of course there was in the midst of the market-place an equestrian statue of the Hautbourg of Crécy, with a long homage in Latin to the valour of that warrior.*

* This statue was erected at the Restoration, the original one standing before 1789 having been melted down under the Republic, one and indivisible, to coin pence with.

The Dukes of Hautbourg had always done their very best to foster in the borough a spirit of dependency, and with the greater success as the town, having no manufactures to support it, and being situated neither on a river, nor in the vicinity of a large canal, nor on the trunk line of an important railway, possessed none of the elements of modern vitality, and would probably have dwindled away into a village had it not been for the great family at Clairefontaine. It was to this family the town owed everything. Its schools, its free library, its museum of stuffed birds, its restored church, filled with furbished brasses and stained-glass windows; its restored gate, out of which the Count Alaric had proceeded when he went to beat Louis VII., and on which still bristled a spike, where it was assured this same Count used to spit the heads of his subjects who were behind-hand with their taxes;* its quaint fountain and horse-trough in the street near the

* I ought to mention that there were some who insisted this was only the remnant of an ancient weather-cock, but there are unbelieving people everywhere.

cattle-market, its-red brick almshouses and free dispensary,—all these institutions had been built, founded, or renovated with Clairefontaine money. Furthermore, the late Duke, with a view to keeping up his territorial influence, had spent annually some four hundred thousand francs in the town. All the necessaries of life in the way of furniture, food, and clothing, both for himself and servants, and many luxuries also, which a less politic nobleman might have bought in Paris, this far-sighted landlord purchased at Hautbourg. He even went the length of wearing in Paris coats cut by the Hautbourg tailor, and of suffering none but the Hautbourg doctor to attend him in illness—acts of courage these which entailed their reward, for I honestly believe the two facts combined did more for the popularity of the Duke, and for the self-esteem of the borough, than if Monseigneur had caused Hautbourg to be raised to the rank of a first-class prefecture, and had brought a cardinal-archbishop to reside there. But this was not all. The establishment at Clairefontaine was not only an ever-flowing source of profit in itself; it also

acted as a great central planet around which gravitated a number of satellites, in the shape of smaller country-houses, occupied by the lesser nobility and gentry of the department. So long as the hospitable doors of the castle remained open these lesser gentry abounded. Harvest festivals, archery-meetings, hunting-parties, masked balls, and charity fairs, followed each other in unbroken, eddying succession. Not a small purse but endeavoured to vie with the big purse; hall played the suit of castle, and villa returned the lead of hall: the whole summer and autumn season was a carnival, and the direct result appeared in this, that the trading men of Hautbourg grew fat, their wives and children waxed ruddy, and the borough in general wore a sleek and prosperous look, such as speaks of plenty, and savings in the funds.

All this, however, was a thing of the past now. The eclipse of the great planet had involved that of the satellites, and Hautbourg was fallen of a sudden from its snug position of ease into penury, the more hard to bear as it had been

unexpected. The Hautbourg of 1854 was but the ghost of the Hautbourg of 1851. Can you fancy Capua ravaged by a pestilence, Pompeii become bankrupt, or Herculaneum abandoned just previous to its interment? There was not a carriage to be seen in that neatly-paved serpentine Rue de Clairefontaine, in which, of a fine autumn afternoon in the good times of the late Duke, the local quidnuncs had often counted as many as a couple of dozen vehicles, come in for shopping, and drawn up in a long *queue* outside MM. Blanchemelle and Camisole's, the linen-drapers, or Madame Bavolet's, the *modiste* from Paris. MM. Blanchemelle and Camisole and Madame Bavolet had always prided themselves upon keeping pace step for step with the fashions of the capital, and it was certainly to their credit that their bills were, if anything, rather heavier than those of the Rue de la Paix; but, alas! where were they and the fashions now? MM. B. and C. were advertising cotton-checks cheap, and a humble placard in Madame Bavolet's window informed you that bonnets were to be had within "first

style" for fifteen francs! It is curious what a single blow with a dragoon's sword can do. The unsuspecting pimple-nosed trooper who cut down Monsieur le Duc, had at the same stroke ripped open the money-bags of a whole borough, dispersed the denizens of some score of mansions, and mowed away the prosperity of twenty square miles as completely as if it had been so much grass. I need not tell you how popular he was, this pimple-nosed trooper, in Hautbourg; but I think he would have spent a pleasant quarter of an hour if the municipal council could have had the dealing with him for fifteen minutes in private. Nevertheless, I am bound to say there was some one against whom public opinion was yet more incensed than against *him*, and that was the new landlord—the new Duke of Hautbourg. After all, the dragoon had acted in ignorance; he was a brute, who was paid to do his work; and as for the Monsieur Bonaparte who had paid him, why, you see, he had become Emperor since, and so the less discussion about him the better. But what was to be said for a man who had come into

a million francs a year, a colossal estate, a magnificent name, and who yet hid away in some hole-and-corner foreign town, and never condescended to show himself? I ask you, what was the good of being a Duke, if one did not stand forth and show oneself? The law ought to put a stop to dukes who did not show themselves. Their being suffered to hold land was a nonsense; it was immoral, and the sooner they were compelled by statute either to relinquish their money or to spend it like gentlemen, the better it would be for everybody. Such were the discourses that were uttered in Hautbourg; and if you would like to hear what else was said about the new and mysterious owner of Clairefontaine, you have only to step in and listen to the conversation held one evening after a very sorry market-day at the *table-d'hôte* of the chief hotel in the place.

It was at that critical moment in the repast when the boiled beef has been removed, and when the company are waiting, silent, to see what is coming next.

Farmer Toulmouche, wizen and small—a fine

specimen of a French farmer nourished on lean pork and red wine — poured himself out half a tumbler of *ordinaire*, diluted it with water, and mournfully ventured upon an observation.

"I never see such a market-day in all my life," he said. "This very day three years ago I sold twenty beeves—no more nor less. To-day I sold never a one."

"Nor I," dismally echoed Farmer Truchepoule, an agriculturist of rather bigger calibre. "Never a one."

"Oh! don't let's talk of past times," protested M. Scarpin, the local bootmaker, dejectedly. He had come to dine at *table-d'hôte* to raise his spirits a little, for trade had not been very brisk at home that day, and Madame Scarpin, according to the wont of lovely woman, had made him bear the penalty of it.

"No, don't let's talk of past times," assented M. Ballanchu, the seedsman, with a sigh; but he instantly added, "When I think of that Duke skulking away like this, and allowing everything

here to go to rack and ruin, *par tous les cinq cent mille diables*, it makes my blood boil."

M. Ballanchu was a fat man, and when his blood boiled, after an invocation to the five hundred thousand devils, his countenance reddened and was ferocious to behold.

"Of what duke are you speaking?" asked young M. Filoselle, the commercial traveller, whetting his knife against his fork with a view to the roast veal which Madelon, the servant wench, was just then bringing in. This was only M. Filoselle's second visit to Hautbourg. On both occasions he had found a prodigious difficulty in screwing orders out of the "beggarly" town, and he saw no reason whatever for standing on ceremony.

"Why, the Duke of Hautbourg, to be sure," answered M. Ballanchu, in astonishment; "whom else should I mean?"

"Ah, yes, I remember," proceeded M. Filoselle, trying the edge of his knife on his thumb. "You did nothing but talk about him last time I was here. Well, hasn't he turned up yet?"

This levity disgusted M. Scarpin, the boot-maker, who communicated to his neighbour, M. Hochepain, the tax-gatherer, that those Parisians were growing more and more bumptious every year. Unfortunately, this remark was lost upon M. Hochepain, for, besides being deaf, he was at that moment immersed in profound speculation as to who would get the veal kidney.

It was Farmer Follavoine, the replica picture of Farmer Toulmouche, who undertook to answer the traveller.

"Turned up!" he rejoined bitterly. "No, and never likely to. Why should he turn up? His agent collects his rents for him regular; and so long as them's all right, I don't suppose he's going to care much whether us here goes to the deuce or not."

"I know I shouldn't—not two pins," remarked M. Filoselle, pleasantly.

"Do you take stuffing?" called out M. Duval, the landlord, from his end of the table.

"I should think he did—he takes everything,"

ejaculated the stout Madelon: the person alluded to being M. Hochepain, the tax-gatherer.

"If I were you," said M. Filoselle, shaking the pepper-pot over his plate, which was by this time full of roast, and grinning approval at Madelon's sally—"If I were you, I shouldn't sit down and pull faces all the year round, as you seem to be doing. If you want to see your Duke back again, why don't you—Madelon, my angel, the bread—why don't you draw up a petition and have it off to him with a deputation?"

"What good would that do?" asked M. Scarpin contemptuously.

"Not much, I am afraid, mon pauvre M. Scarpin, if it was you who headed the deputation: for your Duke might think the jaundice had broken out here, and people who are rich don't like the jaundice. But if you sent somebody with a more cheerful face on his shoulders, something might come of it. After all, though," pursued the collected M. Filoselle, "it depends on what sort of a man your Duke is. In my experience there are dukes and dukes. I once

knew a duke who was no higher than Madelon's waist there, *par exemple;* he wasn't so stout. We travelled together on board a steamboat going down the Rhine—you don't know the Rhine, M. Scarpin? it's a splendid river, *couleur café au lait*, with a bordering of sugar-loaves on each side. The duke was standing abaft blowing away at a cigar. Said I to him, 'Monsieur le Duc, it is the mission of great men to patronize the arts and manufactures. I am travelling for three world-famed houses: one in the drapery way, another in the musical instrument line, and the third in the wine business. I also take subscriptions and advertisements for two newspapers, one democratic, the other conservative. If you will honour me with an order for a flute, and put down your name as subscriber to one of the papers, you will encourage native industry and promote the development of journalism.'

"'Monsieur,' he replied drily, 'I am not a great man. I don't play the flute, and I think that journalism is a great deal too much developed as it is,' and with this he turned on his heel.

grumbled M. Ballanchu, still eying M. Filoselle threateningly.

"Radical?" echoed the commercial traveller, catching up the word, and laughing from ear to ear. "There, my good Monsieur Seedsman, didn't I tell you he must be a phenomenon, this old man. *Peste!* you don't suppose it's every province in France that begets radical dukes."

"No, and a good job too," roared M. Ballanchu. "And this one would never have been what he is if his nephew had had five minutes' time before dying to disinherit him. Clairefontaine wasn't made for such as he—a wrong-headed, obstinate, canting Jacobin."

There was a stiff old half-pay officer of the name of Duroseau dining at the *table-d'hôte*. He had been too much absorbed as yet by the process of mastication, to take any part in the conversation. (His teeth were false, and he was obliged to eat slowly to prevent them coming out.) But now, having laid down his knife and fork, and noticing the puzzled look on the commercial traveller's face, he said gruffly,—"Young man,

you must have heard of the ex-deputy, Manuel Gerold ?"

"Of course I have, captain; he was one of the first speakers in the old Assembly under the Republic and poor King Pear.* I heard him speak once in the House of Representatives. Thunder! Monsieur Ballanchu, your voice was nothing to his. But what of him, captain ?"

"Well, young man, it's he who is now Duke of Hautbourg."

M. Filoselle, who had not been brought up at court, and ignored a good many maxims of dinner-table etiquette, gave a prolonged whistle.

M. Duroseau went on, not sorry to have taken the "forward young jackanapes" aback.

"At the time when you saw Monsieur Manuel Gerold, under the late King's reign" (Captain Duroseau laid an emphasis on the words *late King*. He was not a Bonapartist; he had fought under

* Le Roi Poire, literally, King Pear—his Majesty King Louis Philippe. The sobriquet was much in vogue between 1830 and 1848; it was an allusion to the shape of his Majesty's head. Happy the king whose enemies can find no worse nickname for him than King Pear.

the Dukes of Orleans, Nemours, and Aumale in Africa, and would have been glad to cut off M. Filoselle's ears for calling Louis Philippe King Pear)—"At the time, I say, when you saw M. Gerold his proper title was Count de Clairebourg; but he has always been a Republican, and never called himself otherwise than by the family name—Gerold. He is the uncle of the Duke who was killed by—by—ahem!—in 1851. He was locked up at the *coup-d'état*, but let out as soon as it was found that he was his nephew's heir. At present he is living in Brussels."

Captain Duroseau, having delivered himself of this concise biographical summary, deemed he had contributed his ample share towards the general fund of conversation, and turned his attention towards a piece of Gruyère cheese.

"*Tiens, tiens,*" muttered the commercial traveller, who had become a little pensive, "that tall man with the grey hair and the eyes like lanterns, who set me all aglow when he let fall those words about liberty and justice—that man is Duke of Hautbourg! And you call him a canting Jacobin,

M. Ballanchu. Do you know what we called him in Paris? We had surnamed him *l'honnête Gerold.*"

"He was a Republican, sir," said Captain Duroseau, looking up from his cheese. The captain admired honesty as much as any man, but he would not allow that it could exist amongst Republicans.

"I don't care that—what you called him in Paris," retorted the seedsman, snapping his fingers energetically. "I only know this much, that it was a bad day for us all down here in Hautbourg when the property up at Clairefontaine yonder fell into the hands of a man who had such cursed mean notions as to how a landlord should spend his money. Let a man be what he likes, say I, so long as he's poor; but when he's rich, and a duke, why then let him show people what a nobleman is, and throw radicalism and all that pack of nonsense to them as have need of it."

This sentiment seemed so perfectly in accordance with the spirit of practical wisdom, that the three farmers, the bootmaker, the host, and the

tax-gatherer, burst into a cordial "Ay, ay, well said." Of course, the tax-gatherer had not heard a word, but his idea was that somebody's health had been proposed, and as the seedsman followed up his remarks by draining his glass dry, he, the tax-gatherer, did likewise. The only two who did not join in the applause, were the half-pay captain and the commercial traveller. The former muttered drily that he did not see what change of fortune had got to do with change of politics, and the latter simply asked:—"Does this M. Gerold, this new Duke of Hautbourg, do nothing for the poor of your town?"

"Poor, sir! who cares two figs for the poor?" replied M. Ballanchu, always foremost in the van. "Who ever said a word about the poor, I should like to know? Do you suppose because a man sends ostentatiously twenty thousand francs a year to be distributed amongst a parcel of cripples and old women, I and my fellow-tradesmen are any the better for it? Perhaps you think I can pay for my dinner by telling our host there that M. le Duc has put a thousand napoleons into the

poor-box? Ask M. Duval." This sarcasm, emitted in a tone of derisive scorn, obtained an immense success. M. Duval thought it was one of the most delicate flights of wit he had heard for many a long day, and inwardly blamed himself for the unjust estimate he had formed of M. Ballanchu's mental powers. As for the three farmers, Toulmouche, Truchepoule, and Follavoine, they reflected that this seedsman was assuredly a strong head, who would one of these days do something in politics.

A little jealous of his compeer's triumph, M. Scarpin, the bootmaker, felt the moment had come for reaping some glory in his turn.

"Now-a-days," said he, "the poor are a great deal too rich; they take the bread off the plate of their betters . . . ."

"Alas! and only leave one the veal!" exclaimed M. Filoselle. "You see," he added, pathetically, "we have lighted upon degenerate times. What with radical dukes and wealthy paupers, there is no knowing where we should all go, were it not for the honest sentiments of such

men as M. the Seedsman. M. Ballanchu, I admire your theories; M. Scarpin—paragon of bootmakers!—I shall make a note of your observation. But tell me—for I have yet to learn—why your depraved Jacobin lives at Brussels. That part of the mystery has not been explained yet." And the commercial traveller turned towards Captain Duroseau.

"I don't know, sir," replied the old officer, curtly; "M. de Hautbourg's business doesn't concern me." The fact is, in spite of himself, the worthy captain looked upon a duke rather in the light of a superior officer; and he was not best pleased to hear him discussed with so much familiarity by a company of "clod-hoppers" and "counter-jumpers."

"When a man lives at Brussels," exclaimed M. Ballanchu, in a sapient tone, "I say there must be something in it. I know more of Brussels than M. le Duc thinks for. People don't go and live at Brussels unless they have a reason."

"No, that they don't," assented M. Scarpin, mysteriously.

"Then you mean to say——?" insinuated M. Filoselle.

"I mean to say nothing, sir," responded M. Ballanchu, sternly. "Only, I'm a man of business, I am; and, unless I have proof positive that a man has a good motive for doing anything, I make it my rule to believe the contrary. This M. le Duc is not exiled by the Government, he has plenty of money and a house waiting here for him. Why doesn't he come to it? If you can tell me that, I shall be ready to listen to you; but, until you do, you will allow me to have my own opinion." And saying this, M. Ballanchu folded his napkin and pushed his chair from the table.

"Yes, yes," muttered M. Scarpin, likewise laying down his napkin, and shaking his head. "There's something not clear in all this. Why was the Duke kept at such distance by his nephew and brother in past days? Why was he never asked to Clairefontaine? Why did nobody never hear nothing of him until, when it was found that Monsieur the late Duke having

left no will, it was he who was to come into the property? Why does he hide away now without daring to show himself?"

The seedsman, the bootmaker, the three farmers, and the host exchanged meaning glances. To tell the truth, they were a little alarmed at their own perspicacity. Without having the least idea what it was they suspected, each yet felt as though his preternatural acuteness had put him on the scent of a tragic state secret. The most solemn-looking, however, was the tax-gatherer. As he had not caught a single syllable of what was said, his countenance was more mysteriously profound than that of any of the others.

The captain, who disliked tattling, and who, besides, had finished his cheese, rose and took up his hat to go; M. Filoselle followed his example; and this was the signal for a general break-up of the party. But the commercial traveller, who, perhaps, was used to having the last word, had not the good sense to retire; maintaining that silence which is known to be of gold. Picking up his carpet-bag in a corner

of the room, he exclaimed with enthusiasm: "O charming town! remarkable alike for its boiled beef and for the genial instincts of its inhabitants, it pains my heart to leave thee. But say, Ballanchu, we shall meet again; and, perchance, next time I come thou wilt purchase of me an instrument of music whereon to pipe the praises of that duke whom now thou abusest; for should he put in an appearance here, O friend! and shouldst thou have the luck to make his acquaintance, I think thou wilt soon discover that, spite of his living at Brussels" (here M. Filoselle judged well to put a prudent distance betwixt him and the seedsman) "he outweighs in honesty both thee and me—ay, and the lot of us, not to speak of the tax-gatherer."

"Talk for yourself, you parrot-voiced puppy," spluttered the red-faced M. Ballanchu. "And the day I buy anything of thee, write it down in a book that I've got more money than I want, and have ceased to care about being swindled."

"*Vive l'esprit!*" retorted the undaunted M. Filoselle. "There is but one Duke, and Ballanchu

shall be his seedsman. M. Duval, I charge you take care of that man; he is so sharp that I foresee he will cut himself." And with this Parthian shot, M. Filoselle chucked Madelon, the serving-maid, under the chin, threw her a twenty-sou piece, made his obeisance to the company, and vanished.

"*Que le diable l'emporte!*" shouted the seedsman, shaking his fist after him. "And as for that 'honest Gerold' of thine, I fancy thou and he would make a pretty pair." To which observation the whole company for the third time cried assent, M. Hochepain this once joining like the rest; for, having caught the two words "pretty pair," he concluded they must refer to a couple of cauliflowers which had figured at the board, and so remarked in confidence to the irate seedsman:

"Yes, a pretty pair truly, but not quite boiled enough."

* * * * *

This dinner and this conversation took place at the Hôtel de Clairefontaine towards the end

of September in the year 1854. A week afterwards, day for day, some stir was caused in the hotel by what was no longer a diurnal occurrence, the arrival of three travellers. They had come by the mid-day train, purposed dining, and would, perhaps, stay a night. One of them was an old man of about seventy, the other two looked like his sons.

CHAPTER II.

HONEST GEROLD.

Un sacrifice fier charme une âme hautaine :
La gloire en est présente et la douleur lointaine.

As stood to reason, they were given the best rooms in the hotel; indeed, there was good choice, and to spare, for the house was empty. Mdlle. Madelon showed them into the yellow drawing-room on the first floor overlooking the market-place, and lost no time in telling them that the two pictures on the wall facing them as they went in were portraits of Monseigneur the late Duke of Hautbourg and his father—"the owners of this house, if you please, gentlemen." That, over the fireplace, with the periwig, was Monsieur

le Marquis, who had been beheaded by Monsieur Robespierre; and that in the corner there, with the frame in brown holland, was another member of the Hautbourg family, Monseigneur Jean de Clairebourg, Bishop of Marvault, a holy man, who had done a great deal of good by burning some Protestants. Mdlle. Madelon had recited all this so often that she knew it by heart. She used at one time to turn a pretty penny by pointing out to travellers the identical bed in which Monseigneur the first Duke of Hautbourg had slept on the night of his return from emigration in 1814, before they had had time to prepare his room for him at the castle. Unfortunately, she had rather overdone this, for, finding it paid, and that people liked to sleep in Monseigneur's bed, she had ended by pointing out every couch in the house as having been occupied by his Grace, and had even unwarily put a gentleman of the Filoselle type, who came thrice to the hotel, each time in a different bed, warranted slept in by the great noble. On going away the third time the gentleman had inquired drily

whether emigration had not imparted somewhat erratic habits to Monseigneur, since he spent his nights going about from bed to bed.

The oldest of the three strangers listened very kindly to the girl's prattle, and the two younger ones seemed amused by it. They were three as handsome faces as any admirer of manly beauty could have hoped to meet. The veteran carried himself erect, and had something in his gait that revealed the old soldier. His hair and beard were both long, however—longer than old soldiers generally allow themselves; for the hair, which was of dazzling white, fell to the shoulders, and the beard half covered the chest. What chiefly attracted one in this old man was the expression of his eyes, which was singularly eloquent and gentle. They beamed upon one, those eyes; and one felt, under their quiet, steady gaze, that they could never have quailed before anybody. The voice, too, had a rare accent of benevolence; it was the voice of a man who thought well of human nature and had met on his path more good characters than bad ones.

The two younger men were sufficiently alike to make it discernible at a glance that they were brothers. The elder looked three or four and twenty; the other was probably a couple of years his junior. Both had the same eyes—at least very nearly the same--as the old man, and their faces were like his, bright, open, and intelligent. Of the two, it was, perhaps, the younger who was the strongest, and he also looked the graver; the elder was slighter of build, more graceful, and certainly more inclined to laugh, for scarcely a minute passed but saw his pleasant features lighted up by a smile. Both were very well dressed—not a common merit in France, where young men are the worst dressers in Christendom: —but as traits of character can be gathered from little facts, it may as well be mentioned that, whilst the younger wore a plain black silk cravat tied in a knot, the elder had a black satin scarf, with a cameo pin in it, and, moreover, wore a gold ring.

Between the three men seemed to exist that cordial, trustful familiarity bred of deepest love

on the one hand, and of fullest affection, respect and confidence on the other.

Mdlle. Madelon, though not given to enthusiasm, thought within herself that they were three as nice gentlemen as she had seen for a long while; and proceeded to testify this sentiment by dusting some of the chairs—an operation which she often neglected where less comely strangers were concerned. Having done this, and opened the windows to show "Messieurs" the market-place and the statue of the Poictiers hero prancing in the middle, she announced that Monsieur Duval would doubtless be up presently to offer his respects; and, sure enough, the words were scarcely out of her mouth, before that gentleman appeared in person.

He was very obsequious, carried a napkin on his arm as if his house were chock full and he had done nothing but wait at table all day; and expressed a hope that the gentlemen were lodged to their liking.

"Perfectly, M. Duval, thank you," said the old man, politely. "But we shall not have

occasion to make much use of your comfortable rooms, for my sons and I will be out all day. It is one o'clock now; I think we shall hardly be home before seven; may we rely upon you to get us dinner for that hour?"

"Monsieur may place his entire confidence in me," replied M. Duval, bowing. (Allow me to notice here how fond Frenchmen are of phrases with the word confidence. An English innkeeper would have answered, "Dinner will be on the table punctually at seven, sir.")

The travellers having seen their rooms and entrusted their bags to Mdlle. Madelon, had no further reason for staying in-doors, and so followed M. Duval downstairs. The worthy host entertained them with warm praises of himself and his house all the way, and was once more renewing to them his assurance about the confidence and the dinner, when he remembered, just as the strangers were crossing the entrance-hall, that he had forgotten to ask for their names. The French police are always very anxious to know the names of strangers who stop at hotels, and the

instructions given to inn-keepers on this subject are peremptory. No name, no lodging. Besides, M. Duval was curious on his own account to know whom he was harbouring. Everything about these well-looking, gentlemanlike travellers pointed to the presumption that they were not haphazard folk.

"I beg your pardon, Messieurs," he cried, "would you have any objection to put your names on the register?"

The old man appeared a little annoyed, but he said nothing to show it, and followed M. Duval into the parlour, where the host began bustling about to find a new quill pen, and then laid out on the table that imposing folio register, which has to be inspected by M. le Commissaire every three days. The pages were marked out in columns, and the traveller was requested by printed queries at the top to supply information as to the few following particulars:—*Name and Christian Name, Age, Birthplace, Profession or Trade, Motives of present Journey, Name of place last visited, Name of place to be visited next, Nature*

of the Certificates of Identity in the Traveller's possession; and lest the traveller should after this feel that he had not said enough and be disposed to communicate more about himself and his intentions, there was a ninth column headed *Observations.* The white-haired stranger took the pen from M. Duval, and in a clear large hand silently filled up the blank spaces both for himself and his two sons; the host keeping at a discreet distance apart the while. When the formality had been gone through, however, M. Duval made a point of deploring the troublesome inquisitiveness of the police, who put gentlemen to so much trouble; and so followed the strangers to the door, very hearty in his apologies as he was in everything. As soon as they had left the house he returned to the parlour. "Now," said he, "let us see;" but he had hardly cast his eyes on the register and the bold handwriting, still wet, than he gave a scarefied start, crying: "Mon Dieu! it's not possible—no—yet, by heavens! it is though." And with one bound he was at the street-door again, his face all aglow with excite-

ment, trying if he could perceive the travellers. But they were already out of sight. They had turned the corner of the market-place and were gone down the street towards the high-road leading to Clairefontaine.

M. Duval was fain to come in again, but he did not remain indoors long; and before an hour was over, the whole town of Hautbourg was in as great a state of excitement as he was.

The road to Clairefontaine was a fine one, and must have borne an animated appearance during the reign of that irrepressible late Duke who was so continually cropping up in the conversations of the Hautbourgeois. An enterprising builder had, however, done his best to spoil it by converting a part of it into a suburb of the borough. He had erected on each side of it a number of lath-and-plaster trifles decorated with the pretentious name of *châlets* and even of *châtelets*, but which looked about as much like the real thing as a child's house of toy-bricks looks like Windsor Castle. There are few things so ghastly as new ruins, and these

châlets, castlets, villas, or whatever else they may be called, were all in ruins, not from age, but from want of care. Imagine a band of school-girls decked out smart for a holiday in pink and white, but caught in a good drenching deluge of rain at the day's outset and standing piteously in the sun an hour afterwards to dry themselves—such was pretty much the idea suggested by the excoriated white plaster on the walls, the washed-out red tiles, and the shutters denuded of almost every vestige of paint. In point of fact, the houses had never been inhabited, and the builder had gone where many other good builders go—into the Bankruptcy Court.

The three men walked along, chatting pleasantly, or, to speak with more accuracy, the two younger ones chatted whilst the elder listened. He seemed to have grown a little grave and preoccupied, and this gravity rather increased than diminished every minute; but he smiled at the bright humour of the eldest of his sons, who, teeming with wit and spirits, found something to say of every

object, animate and inanimate, on the road; and he nodded kindly whenever the youngest, less brilliant but more thoughtful, capped his brother's witticisms by some quaint remark, arguing gentleness of mood and quiet, scholarly perception.

"Where are you taking us to, father?" asked the eldest, smiling; "I begin to think this mysterious pilgrimage of ours is to end on a ruin: everything we pass is dilapidated. Look at that public-house."

"Our pilgrimage is drawing to its close, Horace," answered the old man, returning the smile; but he added with some anxiety in his tone, "Do you really think the country looks dilapidated? We have met no beggars yet, and I generally make that my test. As to ruined public-houses, why, you know, I do not feel much sympathy for them."

Horace looked around a moment, as if trying to detect a beggar, and, not succeeding, answered, "I really think one only sees beggars in free lands. I have met plenty in Belgium, and when

we went to England last year I saw nothing else; but here——"

"Here one has gendarmes instead," broke in the younger brother, quietly; and he pointed to a booted representative of Law and Order, who was, in truth, the fifth or sixth they had met that afternoon.

They had walked about a mile and a half, and, at this juncture, reached a point where four roads met. A young girl was coming towards them with a basket of eggs on her arm. The old man, who appeared doubtful as to which road to take, raised his hat and said, "Will you kindly tell us the way to Clairefontaine, Mademoiselle?"

"There to the left, Monsieur," she answered; "it's not above ten minutes' walk. See the sign-post."

They had not noticed the sign-post. It said: *Clairefontaine*, ½ kilomètre; *Clairebourg*, 2 kilomètres; *Boisgency*, 3½ kilomètres; *Sainte Sophie*, 5 kilomètres.

"Clairefontaine!" muttered the elder brother,

and he proceeded to quote what seemed to him appropriate:—"*Fons Bandusiæ, splendidior vitro, cras donaberis hædo.* Are we bent on sacrifice, father?" he added, laughing.

The old man laid a hand on his shoulder:—"You shall answer that question for me yourself, my dear boy, when we come back this evening," he replied, with a gravity which surprised his two sons. "Perhaps, indeed, Clairefontaine is to be our Bandusian Fount," he continued, gently, "and maybe there will be a sacrifice there. I accept your omen."

The party walked on in silence for the next few minutes—the father still grave, the sons both wondering—until a turning in the road brought them abruptly in view of the lodge-gates of Clairefontaine, with the princely avenue of elms beyond, and the turreted mansion, half palace, half castle, closing the prospect grandly in the distance. The old man's face seemed to light up with quick emotion, and the two young men gave a murmur of admiration. Certes, it was a splendid sight. Clairefontaine House in

its lonely majesty, bathed in the purple rays of the autumn sun, and surrounded by its cortège of stately trees, still looked like a queen in the midst of her court.

"What a thing is wealth," sighed Horace. "And to think that the owner of this paradise is perhaps some Crœsus who finds the country slow, and spends three-fourths of his time in Paris cooped up in a set of rooms scarcely bigger than that lodge yonder."

"You will have the opportunity of inspecting your paradise at leisure," answered his father, "for this is the end of our journey." And the gate being now reached, he pulled the bell-chain hanging on one side of it.

Out hobbled the old crone whose acquaintance we have already made. She was used to the applications of visitors desirous of seeing the grounds, and the more of such came the better she liked it; for a visitor generally represented at least a forty-sou piece. These, however, were not ordinary applicants, as she soon found. When the three strangers had been admitted within

the massive bronze gates, forged all over with scutcheons and ducal coronets, the elder drew a letter from his pocket and handed it to her.

"It's from Monsieur Claude, the agent," he said.

The old woman fumbled in her apron for a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, put them on with a shaking hand, broke the seal of the letter, and read these lines:—

"MADAME MABOULE,—

"YOU will please to show the bearer of this all over the castle, the rooms, stables, picture-gallery, or, should he prefer visiting the house alone, you will give him the keys.

"J. CLAUDE."

"Oh, Monsieur, then, is the gentleman whom Monsieur Claude was speaking about the other day?" exclaimed Madame Maboule, throwing a searching but respectful glance at the strangers. "He said a gentleman was coming as would

want to see the castle—a friend of Monseigneur the new Duke's, I believe?"

The old man bent his head affirmatively; his sons opened their eyes; they appeared not to know in the least whither their father was tending, nor what was his motive in bringing them there.

Madame Maboule, dismal at her best, but more than usually so when she stood in the presence of the great, whimpered a hope that Monseigneur was quite well, and inquired whether the Messieurs would go up to the house alone, or whether she should accompany them.

There was a moment's deliberation on this point; the stranger evidently wished to save the worthy old soul the mile's walk up the avenue, but Madame Maboule protested with wheezy fortitude that the walk was nothing to her, and that the Messieurs would lose their way in the apartments if she was not there to guide them. "But perhaps," added she, with an inquiring glance at them all, "the Messieurs have been here before?"

"I was here once," answered the old man, in a hurried tone, "but it was a long time ago; things have changed since then. I might not know my way now." And to compensate the honest crone for the trouble she was going to take, he slipped a *napoleon* into her hand.

"I am sure Monsieur is very generous," was the grateful and somewhat bewildered acknowledgment; and the next minute the four set off in company, the old woman leading the way, and the three gentlemen walking slowly, not to tire her.

As nothing so much resembles one old mansion as another old mansion; and as, moreover, the description of abandoned drawing-rooms and bedrooms, silent libraries and picture-galleries, old-fashioned furniture muffled up in chintz coverings, and old-fashioned beds overhung with imposing dusty canopies, can scarcely be expected to interest any save very enthusiastic admirers of bric-a-brac, we will not follow the strangers in their inspection of the Castle of Clairefontaine, but, leaving them to the care of Madame Maboule,

wait for them outside on the open terrace, overlooking what had a few years before been one of the finest gardens in the province. The walk up the avenue had taken about three-quarters of an hour, protracted as it was by constant halts on the part of Madame Maboule to point out this or that feature of interest in the landscape. Here was a bench on which Monsieur the late Duke would often sit to read his paper. There, on that rising plot of ground, a belvedere erected by Monsieur the Marquis, who was very fond of looking at the stars with a telescope, eighty years ago; there, again, in that by-path, if the Messieurs would step out of their way and see, was a marble urn erected over the burying-place of a pet dog by Madame la Marquise, wife of Monseigneur who was imprisoned in the Bastille by Louis XIV. —a very beautiful lady, gentlemen, and much respected by the King. But of all the objects, that which had most fascination for the old woman was a beech-tree that had been used to hang a Jacobin on. The man had led the sacking of Clairefontaine in 1793, and had re-

tired to live in peace for the next twenty years. But in 1814, when the exiled family returned, the peasantry had dragged him out and strung him up in the night opposite the new Duke's windows—a delicate piece of attention that had greatly touched Monseigneur, and seemed both natural and proper to Madame Maboule. In the castle itself the party stayed more than a couple of hours. The old man appeared desirous that his sons should see every nook and corner of the house and miss none of its accumulated splendours. Madame Maboule lent herself readily enough to his whim. She took them from floor to floor, from room to lobby, lobby to hall, hall to chapel; turning creaking locks with her jingling keys, and explaining everything as if she was speaking about a city of the dead, and showing things that had long ceased to be understood by a modern generation. What more garrulous than an old woman who has lived five-and-sixty years on an estate, and has room for nothing else but the memory of its past glories in her venerable head? Every foot of carpet

within the doors of Clairefontaine House was so much consecrated ground to Madame Maboule. She talked about her departed masters with a plaintive, wobegone, motherly sort of affection; and, throughout all her utterances, rang like the burden of a dirge—a lamentation over that new Duke whom she had never seen and whose absence she could not understand. The young men listened to her with much the same kind of silent attention which one bestows upon an aged monk showing one over a cathedral. Their father spoke very little during the whole two hours. Only once, when they were in an upper room—which, in old times, had been a nursery—he smiled a rather sad smile, and, pointing to a picture of a very young child hanging in a corner, asked who that was. "That, sir, is the present Duke of Hautbourg," answered the old woman; "it was taken nigh upon seventy years ago."

At last the inspection was over; the desolate castle had been visited from roof to basement, and the three strangers with their guide stood together on the terrace.

"Well, Emile," asked the old man of his youngest son, "what do you think of all we have just seen?" And he looked with a rather curious expression into the lad's grave, blue eyes.

"I think there is a skeleton in that house like in many poorer ones, father," replied the young man, pensively.

"What skeleton, dear boy?"

"The skeleton that prevents the new Lord of Clairefontaine from coming and living here. Do you not think, father," added he, with concern, "that there must be very bitter memories attached to some of that splendour if the new Duke of Hautbourg persists in keeping away like this?"

The father made no immediate answer, but a few moments afterwards he turned to the old lodge-keeper and said softly, "We will not trouble you to stay with us any longer, Madame Maboule. I and my sons are going to sit down for a little under yonder oak, and perhaps we shall walk about in the park for a short while afterwards."

Madame Maboule dropped a curtsey. "Very well, sir," she answered, in her usual dolorous

tone. "When you want to return you have only to follow the avenue straight and I shall be down at the lodge to open the gate for you." She curtseyed for a second time and hobbled away slowly.

The three men walked towards the oak which stood in the centre of a grass-plot just beyond the outskirts of the garden and commanded a view of almost the entire park. Was it an undefined presentiment of something strange about to be told them or merely hazard that kept the young men silent as they went? anyhow, silent they were; and save but for the chirping of the birds overhead, and the muffled sound of their own footsteps in the long grass, there would have been a complete stillness all around them as far as the eye could reach. There was a wooden form running round the rough trunk of the oak, and all three sat down on it.

"Can you guess why I have brought you here?" inquired the father, addressing both his sons.

They shook their heads.

"Why, father?" they asked.

"I wish to tell you a story," he said, affectionately taking a hand of theirs in each of his as they sat on either side of him. "Should you like to be told what is the skeleton in Clairefontaine, Emile? And you, Horace, are you curious to learn how people may live cooped up in rooms no bigger than the park-lodge, and yet be more at ease than in a fine palace like this?"

Emile smiled slightly.

"Then there is a skeleton," he rejoined; and Horace added, grimly, "I was complaining that one met nothing but beggars in free countries. One may remark, also, that there seem to be a deplorable number of skeletons in rich houses. I have never been over a castle but somebody had poisoned somebody else in it, or put him down a well, or thrown him out of the window."

"Yes; but there is nothing of that kind in my story," interrupted the old man, good-naturedly. "It is not a legend of murder or

mystery. It is—— Well, I can hardly call it an every-day story, but you shall hear and judge." And, seeing both young men attentive, with their eyes fixed on him, he began his recital in a quiet, simple tone—much as he would have told a fairy tale to young children.

"Once upon a time," he said, "there was a very rich nobleman, who lived in a house such as this, we will say. He was a kind-hearted, well-meaning man; but he came in troublous times, when people's minds were excited by the remembrance of many centuries of oppression, and, when at last there was a rising of the down-trodden against their masters, he paid, as we must often do here below, for the sins of some of his ancestors. Let it be recorded that he perished nobly. In dying, he left two orphan sons (their mother was dead some years before) —the elder seventeen years old, the younger nine. In the ordinary course of things, the elder must have succeeded his father, and become his brother's guardian; but there was so much exasperation against the nobility throughout the

whole country, that the boys would not have been safe had they remained in France. So both of them went into exile. The eldest, who had assumed the family title of marquis, became an officer in the Prince of Condé's army at Coblentz; the younger, who was a viscount, was taken as page of honour into the household of a royal princess, the Countess of Provence—the same who, a few years later, died in London, calling herself, and called by the Royalists, Queen of France. I have no need to remind you what came eventually of the Prince of Condé's army. The officers and soldiers who composed it were brave men, but they were bearing arms against their country, and somehow experience shows that victory does not remain long on the side of those who are not in the right. After a series of reverses they got dispersed. Some went and accepted service in foreign armies; others—and, probably, the wisest there — started for America, to try and build up their fortunes once more in a new world; and others, again, emigrated to England, where they formed a large,

but not very united, nor always very reasonable, colony of titled refugees. Amongst those who went to England were the young Marquis and his brother. They had been completely ruined by the Revolution, for it had been decreed by the Convention that those who emigrated should forfeit their estates; so that all the two boys had to live upon was the money raised by means of some of the family plate and jewels, which a devoted servant had been able to rescue from the wreck of the property, and had contrived to smuggle out of France. Those were hard times for lads brought up in purple; but the two brothers would have been ungrateful to complain, for many were twenty times worse off than they. There were plenty of dukes and counts who became music, fencing, language, or drawing-masters. One or two set up as small shopkeepers. There was one (he became a peer of France afterwards) who took to carpentering, and very successfully, too. Unfortunately, however, this adversity, which should have read a lesson to many of those whose lack of wisdom had

been the cause of the Revolution, seemed not to profit them much, and there was little else in the refugee colony but bickerings and disputes, teacup storms and intrigues, plans for invading France and restoring the old régime, and anathemas of all sorts against the Liberal principles of the Revolution. It was this that first pained the younger of the two brothers, and, by degrees, estranged him from the Royalist cause. As he grew old enough to think for himself he could not see that the Revolution had been such a crying wrong as those of his own caste would have had him believe. Of course, the excesses of the Revolution, the blood-orgies of '93, were a wrong—a cruel wrong, and they have been dearly expiated by Republicans. But one should separate the good from the bad in pronouncing judgment;—one should draw a difference between the Revolutionists who asked only for freedom and fair laws, and who fell victims of their moderation, from the few sorry villains who—— But let us speak mercifully of them, too," exclaimed the old man, humbly. "Who shall

presume to judge motives: Death has passed over good and bad alike now!"

He paused for a moment, and then resumed: "The boy, the young viscount I mean, had struggled a good while with himself before daring to admit even to his own conscience that he was disposed to think differently from those who formed his habitual society. You see, his father had been put to death unjustly, and it required some time before he could perceive that it was no more just to hold the Republicans as a body responsible for this crime than it would have been to make his father responsible for the misdoings of those brother noblemen of his whose follies had driven the country into rebellion. Perhaps if the language of the exiles in whose company he lived had been more tolerant than it was, their conduct more dignified, and their apparent aims more patriotic, he would never have been brought to reason in this way, and would have remained a royalist to the end, like his elder brother. But, with few exceptions, the conduct of the refugees was not dignified; and if they felt any patriotism,

they seldom showed it in their schemes. To a boy of seventeen they seemed a feeble, prejudiced, selfish body of men, whom misfortune had neither chastened nor instructed; and it was impossible not to reflect, after hearing them talk, that should they ever recover their power they would inevitably lose it again before long through sheer force of obstinacy and wrongheadedness. In youth we quickly fly from one extreme to the other, for when we lose our faith in one set of principles we conclude that those most diametrically opposite to them must be the right ones. The young exile, feeling his confidence in and his admiration for the Royalist party growing less and less every day, began gradually to take up with Republican views. This was at the period when Bonaparte was shaking all Europe with his Italian victories, and when the military glory of France shone with a lustre it had never possessed before. It was difficult not to feel one's heart thrill at the report of battles in which Frenchmen fought and won against treble odds; and though the refugees and the English papers with them sneered at these

victories and declared they were not true, yet such denials were so evidently prompted by jealousy that they rather added to than diminished the enthusiasm with which every fresh success was received by those who really loved their country. One day—this was in the year 1801—the young Viscount took a resolution. He was grown tired of an exile's life, and saw nothing to tempt him in the prospect of dangling indefinitely about the mock court of the Prince who styled himself Louis XVIII. Summoning up all his courage—and I can assure you it needed courage — he informed his brother of his intention of returning to France and enlisting in General Bonaparte's army. The Marquis had never bated a jot from his royalism, and the thought that any one of his family could ever turn Republican had not crossed his mind even in dream. He started at his brother's communication as if he had been shot. The thing seemed to him like blasphemy. A brother of his to turn renegade and serve in the ranks with those who had murdered his father! Why this was as bad as being accomplice to a parricide!

He became white with dismay, seized his brother's hand, and entreated him to declare that it was all a hoax, a joke, or anything save the truth. But the younger brother held good. He had been prepared for some consternation, but he felt so sure of his own motives, he knew so well that hatred against his father's murderers burned within him as strongly as ever, that he attached little importance to the horrified expressions of his brother, and even hoped to convert him. He pleaded his case with all the boldness he could muster. There could be no offence to their father's memory, he showed, in serving their common country. It was not Robespierre or Marat he was going to fight for—those men were dead—he was simply going to be a French soldier; and, in short, he adduced all the arguments which he had uppermost in his heart, and which his conscience has ever since—yes, ever since—assured him were right. The Marquis, however, refused to be convinced. Chivalrous and unbending in all points of loyalty, he considered desertion of one's party a crime too heinous for excuse. He was

shocked: he cast his brother away from him like a viper; and from that day up to his death he would never consent to see him nor speak to him again."

The old man became silent a moment. He was a little pale; but he proceeded in an unbroken voice: "Party spirit ran high in those days; I believe men could hate each other more intensely than they do now. It was a time when the words Royalist or Republican put barriers between men which no strength of family ties could break down; and once a man had left one camp for the other, the feud between himself and his former friends was something deep, lasting, and absurdly violent. In this case the younger brother did not hate the elder, God knows! but the elder bore an eternal grudge against the younger, and—— But let bygones be bygones, and may those with whom pardon lies forgive as fully as the younger brother has forgiven. I don't want to make my story too long," continued the old man; "so shall only say that Fortune dealt kindly with the boy who enlisted in Bonaparte's army. He soon rose to be an officer, was at the end of three years a

captain, and might have gone much higher had he chosen to remain in the service. But in becoming a soldier under Bonaparte he had sworn allegiance to the Republic which then existed, and had not foreseen that an Empire was going to be established. When the First Consul converted himself into an Emperor, he tendered his resignation, which was not immediately accepted—for officers and men were wanted just then for the Austerlitz campaign;—but on the declaration of peace, when it was seen that he would neither accept promotion nor the legion of honour, he was allowed to retire; and so went to settle in Paris, where, by the help of pen instead of sword, he cut out for himself a new career, which was blessed, perhaps, beyond his deserts—certainly beyond his expectations. The elder brother, meanwhile, prospered in a different way. Whilst still in exile he contracted a wealthy marriage—in fact, he married the daughter of an English slave-trader—and, in course of time, came back to France with the Bourbons, was made a duke, bought back with his wife's money the family estates, which had

been sold after confiscation as 'national property,' and died with many honours upon him, unwavering to the end in his allegiance to the dynasty whose ups and downs he had shared. Now what should you say," asked the old man, looking at both his sons alternately, and consulting their eyes with some signs of emotion,—"What should you say if, by a turn of fate, the elder brother's only son, having died childless, the younger brother—the Republican—had one day unexpectedly become inheritor both of the dukedom and the redeemed estates? . . . . Try and consider," he went on in a voice that, to his sons, sounded almost pleading, so modestly appealing was it, and so earnest,—"Try and consider what was the position of this younger brother. He had never looked for this inheritance and never desired it. It came upon him through a calamity, which was itself the result of a political crime, and this alone might have afforded an honest man excuse enough for refusing the fortune, seeing that it is difficult to hate crime as we should when it has helped to make us rich. But there were other

reasons. From the moment when he had parted from his brother, the Republican had, boy and man, pinned his faith to one code of principles. Rightly or wrongly, these principles did not allow of his wearing a title, and so he had discarded that of viscount, which he originally wore, for his own plain family name. It was under this name that he was generally known, and had conquered such small reputation as he possessed; and it was under this name that, by the confidence of a Radical constituency, he had been elected three or four times over to the legislature as an advocate of liberal opinions—that is, of freedom at home and of slave-abolition in the colonies; for, remember, we are speaking of a few years ago, and the abolition of slavery was one of the chief party-cries of French liberals before '48. Now, under all these circumstances," concluded the speaker slowly, "could this man who refused to wear a viscount's title with consistency assume a dukedom? or could this man, who was an opponent of slavery, accept an estate that had been bought with the money of a slave-trader?

There was a moment's silence—it was only a single instant—and then both sons rose together, their heads uncovered and their eyes glistening.

"No, father," faltered the youngest proudly, but he was too much moved to say more: and the eldest added, his voice gushing with admiration and enthusiasm, "But you had no need of dukedom or estate, father, to make your name illustrious."

The three men shook hands; and in that warm, silent grasp, and the few words just recorded, was the father's act of self-denial—his refusal of wealth and rank for conscience' sake—ratified by his children.

This, by the way, was the first the two young men had ever heard of their family history. They had known their father only as Manuel Gerold, a Republican, who was one of the most esteemed leaders of his party, and whose unaffected integrity and simple undeviating fidelity to principle had earned for him, at the hand of friends and foes alike, the enviable surname of "the honest Gerold."—There are certain Frenchmen who have

the knack of making Republicanism peculiarly hideous, but Manuel Gerold was not one of them. The Republic, such as he dreamed it, would have been a very fine thing; unfortunately, it had this drawback, that before it could be established every man must have put away the leaven of unrighteousness and become transformed into an enlightened philanthropist devoted to schemes of intelligent benevolence. I do not think that in the worthy gentleman's projects of commonwealth any provision at all had been made for Houses of Correction — much less for such functionaries as a hangman, gendarmes, or turnkeys. He had a way of talking about schools which gave one to understand that crime was but the result of ignorance, and that if men only knew how to read, write, and count, the necessity for coercive establishments would disappear. I suppose it would have been hardly fair to remind him of the remarkable number of individuals who turn their knowledge of the three rules to account by subtracting funds from their neighbours' pockets in order to add them to their own. With all his

naïveness, however, and his humane belief in the innate virtues of mankind, Manuel Gerold was no mere dreamer. He could be shrewd when he chose, and he had such a hearty scorn for all that was mean or false that he had more than once taken adversaries aback by the crude, energetic way in which he assailed abuses. There was something in him both of the soldier and of the priest. Very mild in his habitual moods, very indulgent also, and chivalrously amiable, he could light up at the recital of a wrong, and pour out words with the same startling vehemence which the hermits of old must have used when they preached the crusades. Having, as he thought, nothing to expect of his family, he had brought up both his sons to the notion that they were humble *bourgeois* who would have to fight their way through life as he had had to fight his; and it had been one of his most constant lessons to them that if a man only remain honest he must end by being prosperous. This was a deep-rooted belief with him: it was not an empty maxim. Had he been well read in his Bible—which I am sorry to

say he wasn't—he would have quoted the noble lines: "I was young and now I am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging their bread." But being a republican Frenchman (and one who held himself for a free-thinker, though he invoked God's blessing twenty times in a day) he simply quoted from his own experience, and said that he had known many men, honest and otherwise, but that he had never met with an honest man who had had cause to repent of his integrity. Educated in this precept, the boys had grown up to be, above all, manly and straightforward; they shared their father's loathing for everything that was not true and frank, and both bade fair, if nothing came amiss, to follow him step for step in his Republican opinions. France is not one of those countries where every right-minded person has a peerage on his table, so that it had been easy enough to keep them in ignorance of their father's family connections. A good many of Manuel Gerold's friends did not so much as suspect that he had any relationship to a ducal house; and as for the general public,

the tendency towards self-depreciation is a failing of such decidedly limited growth amongst Frenchmen, that a man who dubs himself plain *bourgeois* is taken at his own valuation without either difficulty or questions. It should be added, now, that their father's communication did not much bewilder the young men. A few days before, Manuel Gerold, who had been living with them at Brussels ever since the *coup-d'état*, had informed them quietly that he intended taking them to France "on a business visit," and once at Clairefontaine, he had told them his secret in the abrupt and simple way just shown. But the feeling brought uppermost in their minds by the recital was not one of very great surprise or excitement. At twenty-four and twenty-one rent-rolls and dukedoms have not the same peculiar significance in our eyes which they acquire in after life. Somehow the young men thought it quite natural that their father should turn out to be a duke; just as natural that he should refuse to wear his title; and the most matter-of-course thing possible that, having inherited an estate with a

slur of ill-gained money on it, he should put it away from him without hesitation. But this did not prevent their admiring and feeling proud of his disinterestedness; for noble traits have the faculty of moving us, even when we are best prepared for them.

There was a long pause, after which the father, who had been looking at his sons with great joy and tenderness, said: "And what should be done with an estate which everybody refuses?"

Emile was the first to speak.

"It has been bought with the price of human beings," he answered gravely; "let it be sold and the money employed in redeeming slaves, or in helping to abolish slavery in America."

"Yes, yes," assented his brother eagerly.

Manuel Gerold had produced a piece of folded parchment of unmistakeably legal appearance. "For the last three years," he observed, "the estate has been masterless, that is, an agent has collected the revenues and paid them into different charities; but here is a deed I have had prepared which makes over the whole property to both of

you jointly; so that now the disposal of it is in your hands."

Horace took the parchment and was for tearing it up instantly: "This shall be the sacrifice of which we spoke this morning," he exclaimed, laughing, and his brother approved, adding: "Yes, let us tear it up, it can do no good with us."

"Stay one moment," interposed Manuel Gerold, and he quoted the two lines that have been placed at the head of this chapter. They were from a new play of Ponsard's, very popular at that time. "Let me advise you to wait and not act under impulse, dear boys," he continued; "the merit of your sacrifice will be greater if it is accomplished after reflection. I did not like to speak to you of this before you were of an age to pronounce whether you thought as I did about this unlucky heritage; but I would not have you pronounce too quickly. Think whilst you may, in order that there shall never be any regret at having acted too hastily."

"But what should we think about?" asked the

elder brother in a tone of surprise, and looking almost reproachfully at his father. "Can Emile or I ever think differently about this matter to what we do now?"

"Heaven grant not! my brave boy," replied the old man, smiling to reassure him; "but I was considering the satisfaction you yourselves might feel in after-life, when, looking back upon these times, you could remember that you had given up a fortune, not on the spur of a generous moment, but calmly and deliberately, like men. This is what I was going to propose to you: let the title-deed remain in your hands for a stated period—say four or five years. During that time the revenues of Clairefontaine shall be devoted to whatever charities you wish; and if at the end of the term you have kept steadfast to your resolution, then let Emile's proposal be adopted, and the whole heritage return to its true owners, the unfortunate slaves with whose freedom it was bought."

It required some little time before either of the brothers could be brought to see the advantages

of this scheme; indeed it is doubtful whether they ever did see the advantage of it at all; but the younger, to please his father, whose real motives he divined, pretended conversion. Emile perceived that the true wish in Manuel Gerold's heart was that his sons should not be influenced by his presence in the decision they took; he desired that they should act for themselves when he was not there to see them, so that the merit of the sacrifice should be entirely with them:—"Very well, father," said the young man placidly, "let us wait for a while; it can make no difference."

The elder brother, however, did not give in so soon. He had opened the parchment and cast his eye mechanically over it: the deed was as formal as possible; it had been prepared before witnesses and signed, so as to be unimpeachable in a court of justice; it divided the estate into two equal parts, Clairefontaine Castle, with the domain of the same name and all the land situated in the town of Hautbourg, being the share of Horace; and the freeholds of Claire-

bourg, Boisgency, and Sainte Sophie, together with the family mansion in the Faubourg Saint Germain in Paris, being that of Emile. To satisfy the requirements of the law the Republican had been obliged for once in his life to sign with all his titles, and his name figured as *Manuel Armand Gerold de Clairefontaine, Duke of Hautbourg and of Clairefontaine, Marquis of Clairebourg and of Sainte Sophie, Count of Boisgency, and Baron Gerold of Hautbourg.* Horace Gerold, after looking at all this, folded up the document again and said in a tone of seriousness rather unusual to him: "I think we shall do better not to wait: our duty in this case is so plain that delay seems almost a wrong. Besides, five years! Who knows what may happen in that time?"

"But there is no absolute necessity for your making the term five years," replied Manuel Gerold cheerfully. "Make it what you like; say two years, or three years. All I want is that you should put yourselves through an ordeal sufficient to show that you are not afraid of the temptation. For, believe me, if you remain firm

in your purpose for some reasonable time, it will be an encouragement to you in many and many trials to come; it will convince you that those sacrifices which seem hardest to the world are not hard to those who have a little common patience to help them."

This settled the matter. The moment it became a question of proving that he felt no fear of wavering, Horace Gerold would have agreed to wait twenty years. He looked about him at the park, with its desolate expanses of untrimmed lawn and wild-growing trees; at the old mansion opposite him, sad and untenanted; and this prospect, the lonely beauty of which had charmed him but a few hours before, now seemed to him chill and repelling: later he felt as though he could have refused a thousand such castles one after the other, and so, putting the parchment in his pocket, he said quietly: "Let it be five years, father. This is the 20th September, 1854; on the 20th September, 1859, we will destroy this deed and make a new one. I shall remember the date."

"Amen," answered Manuel Gerold fervently.

It was now about five o'clock; and the great resolution being taken, the father and his two sons walked leisurely in the direction of the lodge-gates, where Madame Maboule had promised to be in waiting for them. On their way they talked on the subject which naturally engrossed the young men most for the moment, the history of the Hautbourgs past and gone. Manuel Gerold spoke of the time when he had last seen that park, some sixty years before, on the night when his father was arrested as a Royalist, and he himself and his brother were spirited away through a side-door, whilst five or six hundred peasants, led on by a local ragamuffin, attacked the castle and plundered all they could find in it. He remembered the dismal coach that had come to fetch the Marquis away, the gloomy flashing of the gendarmes' swords in the torch-light, the exulting yells of the rabble at seeing the nobleman manacled like a felon, and the desperate, heroic attempt made by a few of the tenants, who loved their master, to rescue him

from the hands of his captors. It was by the efforts of these tenants that the Marquis's two sons had been saved from being arrested like him. The tenants had used force, for the boys wished to go with their father, and Manuel Gerold recollected a rough, devoted farmer who had gagged him with his hand to prevent him screaming. Then there was talk of the bloody assize that had been held in the old town-hall at Hautbourg by one of Robespierre's judges; of the destruction of all the monuments and memorials that could in any way recall the great family of Clairefontaine, of the pillage of the church, and its conversion into a granary, and of the sale of Clairefontaine by the Republican Government to a Radical attorney for a few thousand francs. When the family returned at the Restoration this attorney, who had already made a colossal fortune, asked for five million francs to surrender the estate, and it was generally credited that he would have insisted upon double had he not had strong reasons for apprehending that the Duke would have him out and shoot him.

"See there," continued Manuel Gerold, stopping and pointing with his stick to a moss-covered grotto, of the sort without which no great park was complete a hundred years ago. "I remember as if it was yesterday my poor father sitting there in powdered wig and ruffles, and teaching me to spell words out of the *Gazette de France* on his knee; the *Gazette* was the great paper then; it used to reach us twice a week with news from Paris, and was about the size of a pocket-handkerchief." These reminiscences of past times, called up tenderly by the father, listened to religiously by the sons, occupied the party until they reached the end of the avenue, where Madame Maboule, civil and melancholy, was standing with the gate wide open to let them pass.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," she cried, tremulously, "and maybe, sir, if you see Monseigneur, you will tell him how glad we should all be to see him. The place looks like a church-yard now there's nobody there; it does indeed."

Manuel Gerold muttered a few kind words in returning her salutation; and, once outside the

gate, turned round to take a last look at the old house and park. His face was perfectly calm, but he said in a low voice, and with an affectionate wave of the hand towards the place where he and his fathers had been born, "Good-by to Clairefontaine; it came honourably into our hands eight centuries ago; our ancestors will not reproach us for having surrendered it honourably."

With these words, the father and his sons walked away, going back, by the same road as they had come, to Hautbourg. On the way, Horace and Emile, by tacit agreement, refrained from speaking any more about Clairefontaine or the past, and their talk was entirely about the immediate future. Both brothers had graduated as licentiates of law, the elder at Paris in 1851, the younger at Liége in 1854, and it had been decided that they should go to Paris at the opening of term in October, to enter themselves at the Bar. Their visit to Clairefontaine and the things they had heard there did not in any way modify these arrangements; but the young men were anxious to induce their father to accompany them, and he had hitherto refused,

alleging his intention of returning to Brussels, where most of his old Republican friends were living. They now tried again to shake his determination, but to little purpose.

"No, let me return into my voluntary exile," he said, gently. "My time is over now; if I could do any good I would come; but the Liberals of to-day have need of younger and stronger soldiers than I."

Emile and Horace both protested against this view, and the discussion was carried on until the three had reached those remarbable lath-and-plaster villas of which mention has been already made. At this point they noticed that for the last couple of hundred yards or so the people they met had eyed them curiously, and been peculiarly sedulous in the matter of hat-raising. The lath-and-plaster dwellings extended about three-quarters of a mile out of the town, and the nearer they drew to Hautbourg so much the more did the number of the passers-by increase. Every one of them without exception stared, stood aside, and uncovered his head.

"It s evident we are not *incognito*," observed Horace Gerold; "this comes of putting down one's name in hotel books." A gendarme was coming towards them at that moment; he stared, too, and . . . made a military salute.

"Ah," said the Republican, that settles the point. "It is not Manuel Gerold they are bowing to, but the Duke of Hautbourg." He stopped a moment. "I had not counted upon this," he muttered. "I had hoped most of the people here were ignorant that Gerold and the Duke were one. It would not do to have a triumphal entry into the town; suppose we retrace our steps and walk about till it gets dark."

But it was too late. On looking round it was perceived a throng of people to the number of some twenty or thirty had gathered in the rear and were following at a respectful distance—not demonstrative but attentive. Simultaneously another throng, three times as big, loomed on the horizon in front. The fact is, Monsieur Duval of the Hôtel de Clairefontaine, startled out of all reticence and composure by the dis-

covery that he was giving hospitality to none other than the famous Duke, who was both the despair and the stock subject of conversation of everybody in the borough, had spent his afternoon going about from house to house and proclaiming the stupefying piece of news that "HE, yes HE, had at last come; and was going to dine at the hotel at seven!" The intelligence in so far as regarded the dinner was not deemed of vast purport, but the other fact about "*his* having come" flew through the town like wildfire, and was speedily exaggerated into the most positive assertion that "*he* had come in company with his entire household," the footmen and butlers composing the aforesaid household being most circumstantially described. There were of course people in the crowd who soon declared themselves in a position to give particulars as to the way in which *he* had come. One had seen the open barouche and four drive up whilst everybody was at luncheon; another had especially noticed the two omnibuses behind containing the family; a third, declining to keep so important a secret to

himself, avowed that he had talked with Monsieur le Duc half an hour, and that Monsieur had told him he was coming to live at Clairefontaine forthwith. Please imagine the sensation! . . .

Immediately, and as though by magic, Hautbourg had became transformed. Silk dresses, buried in lower drawers ever since the fatal "three years ago," were drawn out in hot haste; windows were thrown open and decked with glazed-calico tricolour flags, showy tablecloths, or any other artistic thing that came first to hand; children had their faces washed, much to their disgust, and were hastily sheathed in Sunday clothes; Monsieur le Curé, abruptly apprised of the news whilst he was taking his afternoon nap, rushed with the inspiration of wisdom to the cupboard where his best cassock hung, and speedily appeared in the market-place, clean-shaven, brushed, with a missal under his arm and with gloves on; as for Monsieur le Maire, Messieurs of the Municipal Council, and Monsieur the Beadle, they might have been descried, towards six o'clock, standing three deep round the door of

the Hôtel de Clairefontaine, silent, august, and prepared to distinguish themselves.

But what shall be said of Monsieur Ballanchu the seedsman, Monsieur Scarpin the boot-maker, and Monsieur Hochepain the tax-gatherer? These three, like honest tradesmen as they were, announced themselves ready to forgive and forget. Monsieur Ballanchu had bought, on credit, a new pair of double-soles from M. Scarpin, and was giving them an airing in honour of the auspicious occasion; Madame Scarpin in scarlet cap-strings was standing at her door, and had supplied herself with two pocket-handkerchiefs, one *utile*, the other *dulce*, *i.e.* fragrant with Eau-de-Cologne, to be waved when the HE and family should pass. As Madame Scarpin was not the only matron, by a hundred or so, who was standing at her door, with cap-strings hoisted and pocket-handkerchief in reserve, you may readily conceive what a fine spectacle the town presented at about the time when HE was expected.

At last (it was about 6.30 P.M., and expectation

had begun to assume that spasmodic form which reveals itself in treading on one another's toes and kicking each other's shins),—at last the report flew: "HE comes! HE comes!" It was quite true: there he came, a little astonished, but perfectly dignified, and walking between his two sons. All three were bareheaded, for everybody was shouting as if he or she had only five minutes more in which to shout on earth. And the hats and the handkerchiefs,—how they shook and fluttered! And the shrill piping of the children, how it rent the air, with cries of *vive Monsieur le Duc;* whilst, with a mighty thunder like that of a bull of Bashan, Monsieur Ballanchu, purple in the face, was roaring *vive le Duc de Hautbourg et Monsieur le Marquis.* Monsieur le Curé, meek and benign, stood up on tip-toe to obtain a better sight, and raised his shovel-hat high above him as if in apostolic benediction; Monsieur le Maire, Messieurs of the Municipal Council, and Monsieur the Parish Beadle, yelled as nobody had ever heard them yell before; Monsieur Duval, the hotel-keeper, had dressed himself as if for a state-ball,

and was smirking radiantly on his door-step, with Mademoiselle Madelon behind, effulgent in a clean gown, a piece of ribbon round her throat and a brooch somewhere on her bosom. To crown all, and complete the *tableau*, the local force of six policemen and twelve gendarmes were drawn up in a symmetrical semicircle, and seemed disposed to salute. You see, they had not yet received advices from Paris that this Monsieur le Duc was a "Socialist." They simply took their cue from Monsieur le Maire, and, seeing him enthusiastic, were enthusiastic, too, as became good officials.

CHAPTER III.

"VOX POPULI VOX DEI."

THE cheering, saluting, and pocket-handkerchief-waving would have been all very well but for this fact—that they could have no influence whatever on the resolution of the three gentlemen whom they were intended to honour. The eldest of the three bowed very coldly and gravely; the elder of the two brothers, hailed, for the first time in his life, as "Monsieur le Marquis," appeared disposed to treat the matter as a joke; the younger brother kept as serious as his father, and, if anything, looked contempt for men who could make such servile fuss about people who were perfect strangers to them. It never struck this ingenuous youth that M. Ballanchu, whilst he bellowed with veins distended and bloodshot eyes, had five-and-twenty

unpaid bills ornamenting the inside of his desk at home; and that poor M. Scarpin, for all his zeal in screaming himself hoarse, was sick at heart in fear of approaching bankruptcy.

The noise and excitement continued long after the Gerolds had entered the hotel, and had been ushered by the obsequious M. Duval into the yellow drawing-room, now blazing with wax-candles and extemporized floral decoration. In the middle of the room stood the table, spread with snowy cloth and decked with all the available silver plate in the establishment. M. Duval had even gone the length of borrowing an épergne from the local jeweller; and the local jeweller, in consenting to the loan, had merely stipulated that one of his shop-boys should be allowed to serve at table disguised as waiter, so as not to lose sight of the precious piece. It was not that he mistrusted Monsieur Duval, but in a town where everybody has become poor, you know, it is best to take one's precautions.

Monsieur Duval had flattered himself upon creating a favourable impression. He had spent ten minutes over the bow of his white tie, twenty

in the hands of his neighbour the barber, who had put his hair into curl, fifteen in superintending the toilets of his subordinates, to see that they were as splendid as himself, and forty in planning and arranging with his own deft hands the adornment of the yellow drawing-room as above. It should be added that he had also invested two twenty-franc pieces in the purchase of the flowers which made such a fine show, and that the *menu* he had devised for M. le Duc's dinner was a thing unique in provincial experience.

The first words of Manuel Gerold—or of M. le Duc if you like it better—fell upon him, however, like a bucket of iced water upon a glowing fire; for, whilst the crowd were still shouting below, and whilst he, M. Duval, smiling from ear to ear, was assuring his guests that the dinner would be served up in an instant—but that meanwhile, if "Monseigneur" * would allow it, M. le Maire of

* Monseigneur simply means "my lord," and was used before 1789 in addressing all very great noblemen. Nowadays it is reserved for princes of the blood, and church dignitaries, archbishops, bishops, &c. Loyal tenants, however, like M. Duval, will still call their noble masters "Monseigneur."

the town and M. le Curé, together with several other of the officials, would feel honoured by being allowed to pay their respects—the Duke, after a moment's whispering with his sons, drew out his watch, and asked a little stiffly: "Monsieur Duval, at what time does the last train start for Paris to-night?"

Poor M. Duval, utterly disconcerted at this surprising question, stood stock still and looked blankly at his interlocutor.

"The last train for . . . . for Paris?" he stammered. "Why, surely Monseigneur does not think of going away to-night?"

At any other time Manuel Gerold would have answered kindly, and stated his intentions without reserve; but the stupid acclamations of the crowd, and the cringing, almost dog-like attitude of the persons whom he had seen during the last half-hour, had put him out of humour, so that he replied with a curtness altogether out of keeping with his usual manner.

"I cannot say what my plans are; but I beg, Monsieur Duval, that you will not call me

Monseigneur any more. If you have ever heard anything about me, you must be aware that I am a Republican, and that consequently I admit no differences of rank but such as exist between men who are honest and those who are not."

As a Frenchman, M. Duval understood this speech at once. He bowed silently and staggered out of the room — professedly to fetch a time-table, virtually to hide the confusion and chagrin which were overwhelming him with a sense that all was lost and that the new Duke was indeed a Radical!

As soon as he was gone the Gerolds held a rapid conference and decided that they must go that night and not risk any interviews with mayors or vicars. There was nothing in Manuel Gerold of the charlatanry of Republicanism, and he felt not the slightest ambition to proclaim aloud to the world why it was that he forsook Clairefontaine. His sons thought as he did; the demonstrative homage of the worthy *Hautburgeois* had too pecuniary a ring in it to cause them any elation. They had seen in their

father, a few years before, carried in triumph by several thousand electors, who cheered lustily, not the name or the purse, but the man; and the present exhibition seemed to them humiliatingly mean in comparison.

M. Duval re-entered in a few minutes, woe-stricken in demeanour and freighted with a time-table. Behind him he left the door open, and on handing the table to Manuel Gerold, appeared to hesitate timidly as though he had something to ask but dared not. Outside on the landing there was a sound of whispering with slight shuffling of feet, and down below in the street, the cries *vive Monsieur le Duc! vive Monsieur le Marquis!* &c. were being uttered enthusiastically and perseveringly as ever.

Manuel Gerold took the time-table, marked the look of trepidation on the host's rueful face, and was about to ask the reason, when he was spared the trouble; for, before M. Duval had said a word, the door left ajar was thrown wide open and in sailed Monsieur le Maire, M. le Curé, as many of the Municipal Council as could squeeze in after

him, M. Ballanchu the seedsman, M. Scarpin the bootmaker, M. Hochepain the tax-gatherer, and some half-dozen more *ejusdem farinæ*, inquisitive, awe-stricken, and respectful. To prevent all chances of rebuff M. le Maire had brought with him his daughter, a damsel of fifteen summers, attired in white as if for confirmation, and armed with a bouquet about a yard in circumference The whole procession advanced a couple of steps into the room and bowed like a single councillor. Then the damsel, being nudged forward by her father, stepped out reddening, and presented the bouquet.

It was to the old man she offered it. He had risen, together with Horace and Emile, and, as the child came to him, he laid a hand kindly on her head.

"To whom is it you are giving these flowers, my child?" he asked: "to Manuel Gerold, or to the Duke of Hautbourg?"

This question had not been foreseen in the full-dress rehearsal of the performance which Monsieur le Maire had gone through down below with his

daughter, so the excellent magistrate immediately hastened to the rescue. He had mentally prepared a short but effective speech, treating of the importance of the nobility in the social scale, the dangers of anarchy, the Imperial dynasty, the salutary blending of liberty and order, and the price of wheat—topics all bearing more or less on the return of the new Duke. Losing his presence of mind, however, at the critical moment, he began his remarks by an allusion to the Crusades, addressing Manuel Gerold as "*Monsieur le Duc, fils illustre d'une race de Croisés.*"

The Republican at once cut him short.

"Mr. Mayor," he said gently but firmly, "I am sincerely thankful, both to yourself and your fellow-townsmen, for the friendly greeting you have given my sons and me to-day; but I should be glad to learn that this welcome of yours has not been offered under a misapprehension. If you have greeted me simply as the descendant of a family long connected with your town, then thank you most gratefully again and again; but if you

have welcomed me under the belief that I was coming to assume any new character, I think it right to tell you that certain private arrangements which I am compelled to make will prevent my ever standing towards you in the same relation as did my late nephew."

Here were all the new-born hopes of Hautbourg nipped in the bud. There was a long murmur, with whispers and sighs from everybody, except M. Hochepain, the tax-gatherer, who, to the indignation of his brethren, cried energetically: "Hear, hear," under a wrong impression. He was sternly called to order by M. Ballanchu, and, whilst this little episode was being enacted in the hindmost ranks of the assemblage, near the door, M. le Curé, brushing his shovel hat nervously with the sleeve of his cassock, and beaming unutterable entreaty through the glasses of his honest spectacles, trotted forward and undertook to plead the cause of his sorrowing parishioners. He was a worthy ecclesiastic, and made the most of his point. The sense of diminished church-dues was so strong within him that he would

have been eloquent in the face of a king, how much more then in the presence of the man with whom it lay to restore prosperity to the borough, and so, indirectly, to replenish the coffers of the parish church. He quoted Maccabees, the Book of Ezekiel, and the parable of the man who buried his talents in a napkin. He marshalled in array St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine of Hippo, and St. John Chrysostom. He adduced the sufferings of St. Simeon Stylites on his pillar, St. Laurence on his gridiron, and St. Andrew of Utica, who perished by fish-hooks. And all this he did with so much unction and zeal as to excite the secret envy of the Mayor, the wonder of the Municipal Council, the admiration of M. Ballanchu, and, indeed, of everybody save that unlucky M. Hochepain, who, being always out of his reckoning, and having still present to his mind the angry rebuke of the seedsman, took it upon himself to exclaim, "No, no," just when such an expression of opinion on his part was most unfelicitous. Happily, M. le Curé was too deep in his own harangue to hear, for he was

just then closing with a masterly peroration, depicting the horrors of famine and the remorse which must necessarily overtake the rich man who allowed his poor brethren to die of hunger. This last form of appeal was only ventured on as an extreme resort, for, as a general rule, M. le Curé had much greater faith in the salvation of rich brethren than of poor ones. He had had occasion to notice that it was the rich who went oftenest to church and put most into the plate.

A great pity that so much eloquence should have missed its effect, but it did. Manuel Gerold's words in answer were few, but they sounded to the good priest like so many thwacks with a cane. The Republican observed that he had never contemplated letting anybody die of hunger; that his annual subscription of 20,000 francs for the poor of Hautbourg would be continued, and even added to if it were insufficient; that he would instruct the agent not to press for rent those who really could not afford to pay, and that if any person in Hautbourg had met

with misfortune which it was possible to relieve by extra donations, he would do his best to help him." This said, however, he made one of those coldly polite inclinations of the head by which kings, cabinet ministers, and people who are bored, intimate their wish to end an interview. The hint was taken with dismay by the curé, with consternation by the mayor and council, with suppressed mutterings by MM. Ballanchu, Scarpin and Co., and with philosophical indifference by M. Hochepain, who, having never understood from the first why he had come upstairs, was not much surprised to find himself going down again.

Everybody bowed on backing out as on coming in, and it was the crest-fallen M. Duval who held the door open. Three-quarters of an hour after the desponding deputation had made its exit, the strangers themselves were gone. Finding that a train left for Paris soon after eight, they had galloped through M. Duval's munificent dinner, or, rather, through a quarter of it, and so stabbed the professional self-esteem of

that honest innkeeper, as well as dashed down his hopes. Not even the 500-franc note with which the Republican generously paid him his bill was enough to make him forget the accumulation of so much bitterness in a single day.

Manuel Gerold and his sons set out on foot to go to the station, but though the market-place and the streets were still crowded, they were not cheered this time as they had been an hour or two before. The ill news brought down from the yellow drawing-room by M. le Maire, M. le Curé and authorities, had spread pretty fast, and as the three gentlemen appeared at the door of the hotel, first one individual, then another who had caught sight of them, proffered a cat-call or derisive whistle—(remember, darkness had set in, and it was easy to whistle without being seen). These isolated marks of disfavour were like the single squibs that are fired off at the commencement of a firework entertainment. Gradually, they increased in number, in strength, and in noise, just as the sky-rockets that come after the squibs. "*A bas*

les Républicains!" "*A la fosse les Socialistes!*" "*A la lanterne les Rouges!*" Such were the amenities which this lively mob delivered. In a minute or two, the cries, cat-calls, whistles, and kind wishes had become general. Everybody—man, woman, and child—contributed his or her objurgation to the cheerful total, and the three Gerolds were eventually escorted to the station by a closely-packed rabble, screaming, yelping, hooting, and barking, "*A la fosse!*" "*A la lanterne!*" "*A la potence!* (gibbet)" &c. One gentleman, thinking probably that this exhibition of feeling was scarcely forcible enough for a practical age, snatched up a stone close to the station and threw it at the group (it struck Manuel Gerold's shoulder), exclaiming, "*Sales Proscrits, pouah!*"

"Ignoble dogs!" cried Horace Gerold, facing round, with his fists clenched in indignant scorn.

But his father gently withheld his arm. "Must we take angry men at their word?" he said. "These don't mean what they say."

"*C'est égal,*" muttered the young man between his teeth; "this is my first lesson in democracy, and if all crowds are like this——"

"But they're not," put in his father, earnestly.

CHAPTER IV.

ANNO DOMINI M.DCCC.LIV.

WHILST the three Gerolds are being whirled along towards Paris, each musing in the strain peculiar to him on the ups and downs of popular favour, it will not be amiss if we take a bird's-eye survey of the year 1854, which was to be a starting-point in the lives of the two young men.

In 1854, France had already been rather more than two years in the enjoyment of its Second Empire, and people who had sworn eternal fidelity to past dynasties, had had abundant time to forget that such had ever existed, that here there were three great topics of interest in the Parisian papers: the Crimean war, the sensation drama *Les Cosaques*, by MM. Arnault and Judicis; and the Cholera. Lord Raglan and

Marshal St. Arnaud, Admiral Hamelin and Rear-Admiral Dundas, MM. Arnault and Judicis (aforementioned) and Dr. Trousseau (on account of the cholera), were seven popular men. Monsieur Jullien—who had organized some promenade concerts in London, and composed a quadrille called the *Allied Armies*, during the performance of which some warriors in red and some others in blue were to be seen emerging from behind a curtain playing a medley of *Rule Britannia* and *Partant pour la Syrie*—was also a popular man. For the first time since the invention of printing the term *braves alliés* was being advantageously substituted for that of *Milords Godam* in the current literature which treated of Englishmen, and there were pictures of French Zouaves warmly embracing Scotch Highlanders in most of the engraving-shops of the capital. The nick-name for his Majesty the Emperor Nicholas was in London "*Old Nick*," and in Paris *le Gros Colas*; there was likewise a sobriquet for Prince Menschikoff, who was styled *le Prince Thermomètre* —a somewhat mysterious joke, but which was

generally understood to mean that the Russian captain's chance of thrashing *les braves Français* depended much more upon Generals Frost and Snow than upon any proficiency of his own in the science of warfare. In order to diffuse a healthy patriotism amongst the lower orders, the Imperial Government had taken care that there should be no lack of seasonable reading, and husky gentlemen patrolled the Boulevards selling songs and pamphlets in which one found many unpleasant things about Ivan the Terrible, who cut off the ears of his courtiers, and about Alexander, who sent French prisoners of war to work in the mines of Ural, and fed them on tallow-candles. For the more intellectual portion of the community who might have been sceptic about the candles, the publishers of the late M. de Custine had brought out a new edition of his famous Russian book; and for clubs and cafés, where the frivolous abound, M. Gustave Doré, then budding into fame, had prepared a comic and pictorial *Histoire de la Sainte Russie*, in which the death of every alternate Czar by

poison was most graphically and instructively pourtrayed. To tell the truth, this war was a godsend, for, had there been no dead and wounded to harangue about, no Czar to cut jokes at, and no Muscovites to pummel, who knows but that the French might have turned their ever-lively attention to that new Constitution which had just been elaborated, and devoted some of their superfluous energy to knocking it to pieces? But one thing at a time is enough for Frenchmen — happily. They only pull Constitutions to bits when they have nothing else to do; and in 1854, being fully employed with other talk, they let the Constitution alone. Besides, most of the workmen who were good at knocking to pieces were out of the way. MM. Bianqui and Barbés, the heroes of the 15th May insurrection in 1848, were under lock and key. MM. Ledru Rollin and Louis Blanc were across the channel. M. Victor Hugo, majestuous and gloomy, was inspecting the ocean from the top of his Belvedere at Guernsey, and defiantly muttering verses from his *Nopoleon le Petit*. MM. Thiers and Guizot,

possibly not over-satisfied with the pretty day's work they had accomplished when they smashed the Orleans throne into splinters in fighting between them for the keeping of it, were indulging in solitary reflections — the one in his own home at Val Richer, the other in Germany. M. Eugène Sue, the Socialist in kid-gloves, great at depicting virtue in corduroys, was fretting away the last years of his life at Annecy; and Dr. Raspail, another revolutionary hero, who eschewed kid-gloves but believed in the panaceal properties of camphor, was smoking cigarettes of that compound in retirement at Brussels; M. Pierre Leroux, the bogey of French mass-going matrons, had disappeared, no one knew whither, taking his materialist doctrines with him; and Generals Cavaignac, Lamoricière, and Changarnier—those modern Curiatii, outwitted and conquered by the Imperial Horatius—were chewing the cud of bitter meditation — very bitter —and shooting partridges to console themselves. As for the minor operatives in the knocking-to-pieces trade, there were eleven thousand of them

at Cayenne, two thousand at Lambessa, and five thousand in Africa. M. Frédéric Cournet, who had commanded the barricade of the Faubourg du Temple in June '48, had lately been killed in a duel near Windsor by his brother revolutionist Barthèlemy, who had commanded the barricade of the Faubourg St. Antoine; and Barthèlemy himself was giving fencing-lessons in London, pending the time when he should be hanged at Newgate for murdering his landlord and a policeman. Thus opposition, liberalism, and all unpleasantness of that sort, had been happily removed. Such Radicals as remained in Paris held their tongues, and it was only at the Bar (where amongst others a young barrister of twenty-eight, named M. Emile Ollivier, was remarkable for the vehemence of his Republicanism) that one could ever hear anything like a subversive speech, delivered generally in defence of some miserable journalist brought up for punishment. To give a civilized look to the new Empire and make everything regular, there was a Corps Législatif, composed of two hundred and

sixty members, and a Senate, composed of a hundred and twenty; who wore, the Deputies, blue swallow-tails with silver braiding, and the Senators, black swallow-tails with gold ditto. The cost of them to the nation for salaries, refreshments, &c. was about half a million sterling: they debated on an average sixty hours a session with closed doors, not a single reporter being suffered to disturb them; and as they were all invariably of one mind, their deliberations were characterized by that blessed harmony which should always prevail in Christian assemblies. The daily press, in 1854, was no longer—heaven be praised!—the turbulent, unmanageable thing it had been a few years previously. There were three journals—*Patrie*, *Constitutionnel*, and *Pays*—which sang the praises of the Imperial dynasty every evening, and though it is true there were three or four more that declined to join in this concert, yet these were ill-conditioned papers, which were perpetually getting into trouble, and which M. de Persigny, the Home Minister, doctored with whip and thong, like a liberal and wise

statesman as he was. As for the *Charivari* and kindred prints, they cut their capers under difficulties. Imagine a quadrille where each of the dancers has a piece of chain and a ten-pound shot riven to the ankle of his right leg. Architecturally speaking, Paris was not yet the vast Haussmannville it has become since; but the trowel-wielding Baron was just come into office, and pickaxe, hod, and brick-cart were already on the move. Every willing citizen who was not required for exterminating Russians found employment to his fill in demolishing dwelling-places. It was known amongst tax-payers that the Rue de Rivoli was going to be prolonged, so that there might be one straight line from the Place de la Concorde to that of the Bastille; that a new Tribunal of Commerce was to be built in the heart of the once pestilential Cité, where policemen of old had never ventured without quaking; that the old Théâtre Lyrique and Théâtre du Châtelet were coming down, and that new ones would soon be erected in their stead, furnished with all modern appliances of luxury and with actually

room enough in the stalls for people to sit in; that M. Alphand, the new Prefect's chief engineer and *fidus Achates*, had taken the Bois de Boulogne in hand, and was bent upon transforming it into a fairy garden, which it should need only five-and-twenty million francs a year to keep in order; that the plans of five new barracks, three new boulevards, seven new mairies, four new squares, and seventeen new churches, were being prepared on a right royal scale, regardless of expense; and that to pay for all these things there would in all probability be more taxes next year. And yet such is the admirable effect of the whip and thong in subduing the human mind and making it supple, that nobody grumbled much; though M. de Rambuteau, who had been Prefect of the Seine under Louis Philippe, remembered the time when the whole city had uttered piercing cries, and groaned aloud and predicted national ruin, because he, M. de Rambuteau, had insisted upon building the wretched meagre street which bears his name. Truly a great change had come over men in the course of three years, and one could

notice the effects of it everywhere. If you entered a café in the year 1854, you were no longer deafened, as in 1848, '49, and '50, by the astounding clamour of citizens discussing across a table whether Cavaignac was a greater man than Lamartine, or Lamartine a greater man than Cavaignac, or M. Odillon Barrot a greater man than either. From prudential motives the investigation of these interesting problems had been momentarily shelved. There were gentlemen to be seen in the cafés, who walked very erect, and had small eyes, and were particularly affable in conversation. Unfortunately, it had been remarked that those who confided their political impressions to these engaging strangers were seldom long before they were summoned to explain them at greater length to M. le Juge d'Instruction at the Palais de Justice, and this had no doubt something to do with the extremely taciturn, not to say unbrotherly demeanour, which men evinced towards each other in Parisian cafés during the year '54. There was a good deal of the same sort of danger in clubs. It was not the most agreeable thing

in the world to be suddenly interrupted in a mantelshelf conversation by a gentleman with a firm beak-nose and a red rosette in his button-hole, who would suddenly spring up from an opposite end of the room and say, with grim courtesy, hat in hand, "I think I heard Monsieur express an opinion adverse to the *coup-d'état*, in which I had the honour to participate. Will Monsieur be so obliging as to name a friend?" In nine cases out of ten, your adversary was one of his Majesty's officers, grateful for past favours, and hopeful by display of zeal to merit a continuance of the same. He would take you out at six o'clock A.M. to the Bois de Vincennes, and there run you through with amazing adroitness and satisfaction. Under the circumstances it was as well to avoid political topics, and to talk in a lyrical strain, either about the glories of war or the ravages of the cholera—taking care to add, however, if one selected this last subject, that the cholera was not half so fatal under the present as under preceding reigns, as was triumphantly proved by the fact that M. Casimir

Péreire, Prime Minister of Louis Philippe, had died of cholera, whereas no such catastrophe had ever befallen a minister of Napoleon, nor was likely to. But let us not be unjust towards the Imperial régime. One was not entirely confined for conversation to the war and the cholera; there were other topics upon which one might venture with more or less safety. For instance, one could speak of the monster Hôtel du Louvre, which was being completed, much to the dismay of surrounding hostelries; of the barn-like building in the Champs-Elysées, which was destined for the International Exhibition of 1855, and which (this in a whisper, for fear of beak-noses) contrasted unfavourably with Sir Joseph Paxton's edifice that adorned Hyde Park in '51; of the beauty of the new Empress, Mdlle. Eugénie de Téba, and of the intention attributed to her of importing the *mantilla* at Court; of the fashions of the year—to wit, frogged coats, striped trowsers, and curly-brimmed hats for gentlemen; three-flounced dresses, hair *à l'Impératrice*, and spoon-bill bonnets for ladies; of the thin face of M.

Magne, Minister of Finance, and the plump face of M. Baroche, Minister of Justice; of the beard movement raging like an epidemic in England, and the consequent depression in the razor-trade; of Mdlle. Anna Thillon, the star of the Opéra Comique, of whom the critics unanimously wrote that she looked like an angel and sang like a peacock; of Dr. Véron, deputy for Paris and editor of the *Constitutionnel*, his renowned *cordon bleu* Sophie, and his legendary shirt-collars, more stiff and formidable than the shirt-collars of any other man of letters from Dunkirk to Bayonne; of M. de Tocqueville, the witty and thoughtful, who was writing his book, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, and M. Augustin Thierry, the scholarly, who was busy at his *Histoire du Tiers Etat;* of the Académie Française, grave and learned body, which professed to ignore Béranger, and which, in the course of the year, mourned five of its members—Tissot, the *savant;* Antonin Jay, the founder of the *Constitutionnel;* Ancelot, the author of *Louis XI.;* Baour Lormian, the translator of *Tasso;* and the polished Marquis

de Saint Aulaire, historian of the Fronde; of the price of oysters, which cost ten centimes the dozen more than in '53, and of the scarcity of truffles on the markets of Périgord; of M. Scribe the playwright, whose eternal young widows and colonels were decidedly beginning to be found stale; and of Mdme. Emile de Girardin's new comedies, *La Joie fait Peur* and *Le Chapeau d'un Horloger* (the last two she ever wrote), which all Paris was flocking to see; of Alfred de Musset, whose once brilliant genius was almost extinguished, and of Alexandre Dumas, who was as prolific in novels as ever; of Dumas the younger, whose recent success with *La Dame aux Camélias* was still in everybody's mouth, and of Mdme. Doche, who played the part of Marguerite Gautier in that drama so touchingly, that the ladies in the boxes used to sob, whilst the gentlemen in the stalls would cough, and—when nobody was looking—dash their hands across their eyes; of Italy and Italians, notably of Silvio Pellico, who was dying at Turin, broken down by his imprisonment in the Spielberg, and of Daniel

Manin, ex-dictator of Venice, who was giving music-lessons in Paris; of a new sort of glove lately imported from England, called dogskin, generally voted hideous, but worn nevertheless because it was British; and of the exorbitant price of articles in Russian leather, owing to the cessation of trade with the Czar's dominions; of M. de Villèle, the celebrated Prime Minister of Louis XVIII., who died during the year, unremembered and almost unknown, from having spent a quarter of a century in retirement (*sic transit gloria mundi!*); of M. le Comte d'Aberdeen, who was Premier in England, and Monsieur Franklin Pierce, the orator, who was President of the United States; of certain English words which were making their way bravely into the French language, such as *steeple-chass*, *lonch*, *ponch*, and *high-life*, the latter of which was pronounced as if it rhymed with *fig-leaf*; of the vintage of the year, which was good, and the crops, which were less so; of Alma and Balaclava, Inkermann and Sebastopol, with discussions as to whether one should say Se*b*as- or

Sevas-topol; of M. de Morny's dinners and Mdme. de Persigny's suppers; of Ravel and Grassot, Bressant and Rachel; of the end of the world, which some French Dr. Cumming had announced as irrevocably fixed for the 13th of June, 1857; and of a new establishment of Turkish baths, which had been inaugurated as a novelty on the Boulevard du Temple, and which a popular journalist, M. Nestor Roqueplan, recommended as a sovereign cure to nephews who wished to get rid of their uncles.

Such, amongst others, were the topics of current talk in Paris in the year 1854, at the time when Horace and Emile Gerold came there to try their fortunes.

CHAPTER V.

BOURGEOIS POLITICS.

"WELL, I think we've about done our furnishing," said Horace to his brother, as he stepped back to look at a long row of law volumes which he had been ranging on a book-shelf.

"Yes," answered Emile; "both our studies are in order: the man has finished nailing down the carpets in the bedrooms; I don't see what else remains to be done."

"Where have you put the tin box?" asked Horace.

"Here it is," said Emile, picking up a small tin case from out of a litter of torn newspapers, bits of string, empty boxes and wood-shavings that encumbered the floor. "What's in it?"

"Don't you know?" exclaimed the elder, looking at him. "It's that title-deed; I put it there when we came from Clairefontaine six weeks ago."

"Oh!" rejoined Emile, becoming serious, and he added after a moment: "What are you going to do with it?"

"We must find a place for the thing somewhere where we shan't be seeing it every day," returned Horace, perplexed. "I heartily wish it were off our hands; I dream about it at nights. It is inconceivable that father should have wished us to keep such a thing five years."

"There's an empty drawer in your bureau," remarked Emile, not answering the latter half of his brother's observation.

Horace was holding the case in his two hands and eying it rather absently. "H'm, no," he said, at the end of a moment's reflection: "suppose *you* keep it? I shall feel quieter if it's in your charge."

The younger brother took the case without making any remark, and carried it into the next

room, which was his own study. Horace heard the opening of a drawer, and the double clicking of a lock. Then Emile reappeared with a key in his hand. "If that can make you any easier," he said, "the thing's done. I've put it in my lowest drawer, left-hand side, and we need never look at it again unless you like."

Horace drew a short sigh of relief and gave a nod of thanks to Emile. After which, as the brothers wanted to set their rooms to rights, they fell to picking up the rubbish, wood-shavings, bits of string, shreds of paper, &c., and piled them into the empty deal boxes, preparatory to having these removed to a lumber-room.

It was during a November afternoon, and the two Gerolds were just installed in the lodgings they had taken, Rue St. Geneviève, in the "Latin Quarter," close to the Panthéon. Their father had some weeks since returned to Brussels; in fact he had done no more than pass through Paris, for, as he said with truth enough, the France of '54 was not a place for men who thought as he did. Manuel Gerold had no

private fortune save that which had come to him at his nephew's death; but in the course of a long and laborious career as a political writer he had amassed sufficient to end his own days in ease and to start his sons in life comfortably. He could afford to give them three thousand francs a year apiece, which is a competence in Paris for young barristers who have not extravagant tastes; and, as the Council of the French Bar requires that a man shall have "a decently furnished lodging and a library of books" before he can be admitted to plead, he had spent twelve thousand francs in fitting up the chambers of Horace and Emile, so that Monsieur le Bâtonnier and his colleagues should have no fault to find. The brothers rented a set of rooms on the third floor—one of those good old sets of rooms built a hundred and fifty years ago, with thick walls, deep cupboards and roomy passages; not like those wretched card-board dwellings which M. Haussmann's architects have contrived—houses where, if the first-floor lodger plays the piano at midnight, he is heard on the sixth story, and keeps some

ten or twelve batches of fellow-tenants awake. Horace and Emile had each a study and a bedroom to themselves; and for their joint use there was a kitchen and dining-room, the latter of which, however, as they seldom dined at home, they had converted into a smoking saloon. There was also a cellar for wine, wood, and coal; and if it would interest you to know what all this cost, I may tell you that their combined rent amounted to eight hundred francs, that is, double what they would have had to pay before 1848, and a third less than they would be obliged to pay in 1870.

Clubs being as yet confined in France to men who are rich and can afford to do without them, the brothers dined and breakfasted at one of those *tables-d'hôte* so numerous in the Latin Quarter, where young barristers, journalists, doctors, professors, and the better class of students resort. The board cost eighty-five francs a month, *vin ordinaire* included; and for that sum one had a very fair beefsteak or chop, an omelette, fried potatoes, and cheese at eleven, and soup, boiled

beef, roast, vegetables, and dessert at six. Certainly the French are adepts in the art of giving *multum pro parvo*. It is impossible to surmise without chagrin what dinner would be given in Great Britain to any individual who expected his six courses *per diem* for sixty-eight shillings a month.

One thousand and twenty francs paid for board and 400 francs for lodging, left each brother 1,580 francs annually for firing and lighting, washing, clothes, and pocket-money. Set down the first two of these items at 100 francs (for between two coal can be eked out), the second at 150 francs, the third at 400 francs, and there remained 930 francs for the last. A young French barrister who has 37*l.* a year for pocket-money may consider himself favoured by Providence. There is no reason why he should deny himself the diurnal *demi-tasse* at his café; he can smoke cigarettes at the rate of one pound of tobacco per month (total 60 francs per annum); on festive occasions he may wear gloves and venture upon a cigar (N.B. a Londrés, price 25 centimes, as good as a London regalia if carefully selected); he may

also indulge without fear in a cab, if not over-addicted to parties; and he will still have a reserve-fund for the exhilaration of beggars, the remuneration of the *concierge* who blackens his boots, makes his bed, and sweeps his room, and for an occasional summer's day excursion to Enghien or Montmorency should his fancy so lead him. Of course, theatre-going should cost him nothing. Every barrister contrives to know a few journalists, dramatic authors and actors upon whom he may depend for play-orders—especially during the dog-days.

The house in which Horace and Emile had taken up their abode was the property of a worthy draper named Pochemolle, who kept a shop on the ground floor, and was accounted somewhat a curiosity in the parish. The curiosity lay in this, that the Pochemolles, from father to son, had occupied the house where they then lived for upwards of a hundred and seventy years—a fact so rare, so phenomenal indeed, in the annals of Parisian trade, that certain of M. Pochemolle's customers, unable to grasp the

notion in its entirety, had a sort of confused belief that it was M. Achille Pochemolle himself —the Pochemolle of 1854—who had flourished a hundred and seventy years on the same premises. Yet M. Achille Pochemolle was not more than fifty; and he looked by no means older than his age. He was a small, smug-faced, gooseberry-eyed man, quick in his movements, glib with his tongue, and full of the quaint shop-courtesy of eighty years ago, which he had inherited from his sire and his sire's sire along with their profound veneration for all that concerned the crown, the nobility, and the higher clergy. It was worth going a visit to the Rue Ste. Geneviève if only to see M. Pochemolle bow when he ushered out a customer or showed one in. He still kept to all the musk-scented traditions of the *grand siècle*. For him a lady, no matter how old and wrinkled, was always a *belle dame;* and heaven forbid that he should ever have driven a hard bargain with one of the gentle sex. He used to say, "*Voyez, belle dame, cette étoffe est faite pour vous embellir,*" or "*Belle*

dame, ce ruban ne peut qu'ajouter à vos graces." Ladies liked it, and M. Pochemolle had a fine business connection amongst ancient dowagers and spinsters of the neighbourhood; not to mention two or three nunneries, the sisters of which, pleased to be addressed occasionally in pretty old-world compliments, came to Monsieur P.'s for all that was wanted in the way of linen and drapery for their convents.

In politics M. Pochemolle was a valiant conservative of existing institutions, whatever they were, and, under the circumstances, it might have seemed odd that he should have consented to lodge the sons of a notorious Republican, had it not been for this, that he was under obligations to Manuel Gerold, and frequently acknowledged it with gratitude. As a private first, then as a corporal, and finally as a sergeant in the National Guard, Monsieur P—— had fired his shot in the three insurrections of July, 1830; February, '48; and June, '48; fighting each time on the side of order—that is, on the side of Government; and it was in the last of these battles that, find-

ing himself under the same flag as Manuel Gerold — who was for a moderate Republic, opposed to a "Red" one—he had been saved from certain death by the latter, who, at the risk of his own life, had caught up Monsieur Pochemolle from under a barricade where he was lying stunned, and carried him away to a place of safety. The honest draper, who set a high price on his own life, thought with wonder and admiration of this achievement. He had sworn a lasting gratitude to his preserver, and seemed likely not to forget his oath; for, when Horace and Emile Gerold came with their father to see whether M. Pochemolle had any lodgings to let, he had gladly given them the best he had, without troubling himself about their political opinions. He even went further, for he spread it amongst his own purveyors, grocer, coal-man, and others, that his two new lodgers were young gentlemen "who might be trusted;" and, on the November afternoon, when the brothers were setting their rooms to rights, he came up to see with his own eyes whether they had everything they wanted, taking

with him as his pretext a letter which the postman had just brought for Horace Gerold.

"Come in," cried the brothers, in answer to the good man's knock, and M. Pochemolle with his letter, his gooseberry eyes, and his excellent tongue ready for half-an-hour's chat, appeared in the doorway.

"A letter, gentlemen," he said; "and I've come to see whether I can be of use to you. Deary me! but these are fine rooms and improved vastly since you're in them. This is a Brussels carpet, five francs twenty-five centimes the *mètre:* I know it by the tread. Nothing can be better than those crimson curtains, solid cloth of *Elbœuf*, cost a hundred and fifty francs the pair, I'll warrant me. And that's a portrait of your most respected father over the mantelpiece?"

"Yes," smiled Horace, taking the letter and laying it on the table. "Our father has a great esteem for you, Monsieur Pochemolle."

"Not more than I have for him, sir," answered the draper heartily, and, peering into the next room, which was Emile's, he continued: "And

that, no doubt, is Madame your most venerated mother?" The picture was one of a fair-haired lady, with tender expressive eyes. The brothers had scarcely known their mother; she had died when they were both children. They nodded and kept silent.

"Ha," went on Monsieur Achille, changing the subject with ready tact. "These pictures remind me of two of mine own which I must show you downstairs. One is a print made in 1710 (a hundred and forty-four years ago), the other is more recent—1780; both represent a part of the Rue Ste. Geneviève, and you can see my shop in them, not altered a bit from what it is now, with the name Pochemolle over the doorway and the sign of *The Three Crowns*. These three crowns, you must know, were the making of our house. Ah, Messieurs, it's a fine story, and you should have heard my grandfather tell it as he had it from his own grandfather, the hero of the tale. Just about as old as you, Monsieur Horace, he was. Then my great-great-grandfather—one day he was walking along the streets, when he sees

a poor woman, worn away with hunger, and two little children on her arms, make a snatch at the purse of a fine gentleman who was stepping out of a coach, and try to run off with it. The two were so near together—he and the woman—that the servants of the gentleman laid hold of him, thinking it was he that had made the snatch; the more so as the crazy thing, in her hurry to get away, had tripped up and let go the purse, which was lying at my ancestor's feet. Of course this took him breathless like, and he was just going to say what was what, when, looking at the poor creature who was crouching on the ground shaking all over, and clasping her two babies close to her, he couldn't bear giving her up, and so says he: 'Yes, gentlemen, it's I that took the purse.'

"It seems the woman gave him such a look as he never forgot to the day when he was laid in his coffin, and he used to say that it was worth going ten times to the gallows to have eyes look at one as hers did. You see, thieving was no joke then: it meant the gibbet: and it wasn't

everybody that would have run their necks into a noose for a beggar-woman they didn't know. Well, they dragged him off to prison, locked him up with chains to his legs, they did; and my grandsire made up his mind that before long they'd have him out on the Place de Grève, and do by him as I daresay he'd seen done by a many a thief and cut-throat. But the gentleman whose purse had been snatched had seen the whole thing and wasn't going to let evil come of it. He allowed the young man to lie in prison a little while, just to see, probably, how long he would hold out; but when he saw that my grandsire wouldn't budge an inch from his story, but stuck firm to it that it was he that had taken the purse, then he spoke out, and one day came to the jail with a King's order for letting the prisoner loose. He was a great nobleman was this gentleman—one of the greatest about Louis the Fourteenth's court; and when my grandsire came out of prison —it was the Châtelet; they're building a theatre over the spot now—he saw this great nobleman, who didn't bare his head to many, standing, hat

in hand, beside his coach-door. '*Will you do me the honour of riding to Versailles, sir, with me?*' he said — ay, he said, '*do me the honour,*' he did—'*I wish to present you to the King.*' And sure enough to Versailles they went both together, side by side, he and the nobleman in the same coach; and at court the King gave my ancestor his hand to kiss, and the nobles between them subscribed five hundred *louis*, with which this house and the shop below were bought. And the purse which was the cause of the whole business, and which contained three crowns when it was snatched, was presented to my grandsire by the nobleman, along with a diamond ring. They're both under a glass-case in our back parlour now, and I can tell you, gentlemen, we're proud of 'em."

"Well you may be," exclaimed Emile Gerold, warmly. "There is not a nobleman could show a more splendid patent of nobility than that purse and the three crowns."

"And what became of the woman?" asked Horace Gerold.

"Our benefactor took care of her, too. He set her up in a cottage on his country estate, and I believe her sons grew up to be honest peasants. But I don't feel much for her, though," added M. Pochemolle, sagaciously; "for, after all, if the nobleman hadn't had his eyes about him when the thing happened, she'd have let my grandsire swing, which would have been a pretty end for a man that had never fingered a penny that wasn't his own, and would as soon have thought of thieving as of committing murder."

Whilst speaking M. Pochemolle strode about the rooms, continuing to inspect everything, feeling the coverings of chairs and sofas with a professional touch, digging his fists into mattresses and pillows to test their elasticity, and closely scrutinizing the wood of which tables and bureaus were made. "I don't want to be talking only about myself, gentlemen," he said bluffly; "let's talk a little about yourselves: the goings on of an old family a hundred and seventy years ago can't interest you much, though it's civil of you to listen. Hullo, what's this?"

In ferreting about, M. Pochemolle had come upon some framed pictures standing on the floor with their faces to the wall, waiting to be hung up. He took one and turned it to the light. It was a print of David's celebrated picture, *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume.** Poor M. Pochemolle became suddenly grave.

"No, no," said he, shaking his forefinger before his face and looking reproachfully from one brother to the other. "No, no, no—don't have anything to do with 'em."

"With whom?" asked Horace, amused.

"With them there," and M. Pochemolle pointed ruefully to the grand figure of the revolutionist, Bailly, standing with hand uplifted in the foreground of the picture. "They're not fit company for gentlemen like you to associate

* In 1789, Louis XVI. wishing to throw impediments in the way of the sittings of the States General, who appeared to him to be voting reforms too fast, ordered the Debate Room at Versailles to be closed, under pretence of repairs. The members thereupon adjourned to the Tennis Court, and there swore a solemn oath not to cease from their work until they had drawn up a new Constitution. David's pencil has immortalized this episode.

with," he went on : "no, they ain't, indeed. And if you'd seen as much of 'em as I have, you'd wash your hands of 'em now and for altogether."

"Are you speaking of the revolutionists?" inquired Emile.

"Ay, sir, I am."

"But come, M. Pochemolle, you were a Republican yourself not so long ago," observed Horace, laughing. "It was in fighting for the Provisional Government that you received the blow on the head which gave our father the opportunity of picking up and making your acquaintance."

"Ay, Monsieur, but the blow on the head doesn't prove I was a Republican. When I was a little chap ten years old, no higher than that pair of tongs yonder, I went to the Barrière de Clichy to throw stones at the Cossacks, who were marching into Paris. Throwing stones was the most we could do, for we were too small to fire guns. Sixteen years later, when M. Lafayette and that set were overthrowing Charles X., I went

out and did my best to prevent them. The National Guard was dissolved then, but I put on my uniform all the same and went to join the Regulars. I stuck to it three days, July 27, 28 and 29, along with the Royal Guards at the Tuileries; and if the Bourbons were expelled it wasn't for want of fighting on my part. In 1848 came our King Louis Philippe's turn, and I was out again, February 23, 24, 25, never closing an eye once during the three days, and seeing six-and-thirty men of my company shot down by the *Faubourgiens.* Well, we were beat, as you know; your respected father and his friends came to power, and there was nothing for it but to rally round them to prevent their being swept away in their turn by the 'Reds.' That's why I fought for them in the three days of June, but it doesn't prove I'm a Republican, for I should do just as much for the Emperor Napoleon if any one were to try and get rid of him."

"H'm, then you can boast with your hand on your heart that you have consistently opposed progress of every sort and kind, and are pre-

pared to do so again," remarked Horace, good-humouredly, but with a small point of irony.

"Ay, sir, I can," answered M. Pochemolle simply, though not without a counter point of irony. "I can, if you think that progress and revolution mean the same thing; but I don't. Let's have order first, say I; then we'll see about the rest afterwards."

"Yet you must have some preference for one form of government over the other," ejaculated Emile, not a little scandalized at this—to him—new way of talking.

"Yes, I like anything better than a Republic," responded M. Pochemolle with deliberation. "See, gentlemen, what is it that we tradesmen most want,—peace, isn't it?—and a good strong government that 'll let us sell our wares quietly, and keep the ragamuffins from breaking our windows. Well, when your honoured father and his friends were in office, what did we have? I know they were honest men and meant well; but honesty's not enough: it's like butter without the bread: the bread's strength, and we want strength too.

M. Lamartine, M. Louis Blanc, and M. Gerold made us handsome promises, and, I know, did their best to keep them; but what did it all come to? Why, in '48, we paid twice more taxes than we'd ever paid before: we were out four days a week quelling riots, and there was no more business doing than if we'd all been living in famine time. Now under the Emperor I don't say but that the taxes are high; only we can afford to pay them. Trade's been brisker these three years past, spite of the war and that, than I ever remember it before; and we don't have any rioting."

"Oh, if you look at these questions from the counter point of view," interrupted Emile Gerold, a little contemptuously.

"Well, sir, don't we all look at things through our particular set of glasses?" rejoined the honest draper roundly. "Here are you two gentlemen come to Paris to start as lawyers, and I am bound I shall hear you both make many a fine speech before I've done with you; but don't you think that what some of you gentlemen are most eager after when

you stand up to preach for freedom and all that, is the making yourselves popular names, in order that people may flock round you, and pay you well for taking their cases in hand. Leastways that's my experience of a good many barristers."

"There's no harm in wishing to become popular," remarked Emile energetically.

"No, sir; nor in wishing to sell one's goods," replied the draper with a laugh. "Only I'll tell you what's the mistake many of the popular gentlemen make: they ask for a great deal more than we want, and a great deal more than's good for us to have; then they've another trick, which is to promise a good bit more than they can ever give."

"I believe you're trying to paint yourself much blacker than you really are," interposed Horace, smiling. "You can't care for freedom so little as you say, M. Pochemolle. That you should like selling your goods is natural enough, but you are a Frenchman, and must see something else in good government but a mere question of trade profits. Isn't there any satisfaction in being a

free man in a free land? Is there no humiliation in living under a Government which treats us like children, not old enough to think for ourselves? Why, now, to go no further than your own case, do you find you have lost nothing by this new state of things? Formerly you had a parliament which debated and voted freely under public control; you could hold meetings whenever you wished to discuss political concerns; you had a free press; you elected your own mayors and your own officers in the National Guard; in a word, you were accounted somebody, and played your part in the State. But now what has become of all your rights?"

"Well, there you put the question in plain terms, and I'll answer you in the same way," replied M. Pochemolle, digging both hands into his pockets, and looking cheerily at the brothers. "A few years ago, as you say, we had all those rights, and what did they profit us? Why, during eighteen mortal years, we had nothing but M. Guizot trying to turn out M. Thiers, and M. Thiers trying to turn out M. Guizot. What

do you think I cared whether it was M. Guizot or the other who was in? There wasn't a pin's head to choose between them, so far as real opinions went; only for this, perhaps, that it was M. Thiers, who talked the fastest about good government, that gave us the least of it: for 'twas in his time that we almost had the war with England, and were taxed seventy millions to pay for Paris fortifications. Then there was the press. Ah! to be sure, that was free enough: there were a couple of hundred gentlemen who abused each other in the papers every evening, and ran each other through in the Bois de Boulogne of a morning. Very pleasant for those who were journalists, but as I wasn't one, that freedom didn't help me. Next, we had the right to elect our own officers in the National Guard, and do you know what was the result? why, there wasn't a ten sous' worth of discipline among the whole lot of us. At election-time it used to be a disgraceful sight to see the officers fawning to the privates, and if one of them was above doing it, or was at all sharp in commanding, why, twenty to

one voted against him; so that he had to carry the musket again, after having worn the epaulet. I know what it is: for I don't want to make myself out better than I am: I once voted against my captain, simply because he'd blown me up before company about my rifle, which wasn't properly cleaned; only I'm hanged if I didn't feel a pang when I saw him, after the election, come and take up his stand in the ranks, whilst I had become a corporal. Then there used to be eternal fallings-out between the members of the Guard who were tradesmen and those who were professional, such as doctors, lawyers, retired officers from the army, and the like. These last were for having all the officers elected out of their set; and we tradesmen, who were in a majority, used to spite them, by electing nothing but our own party. I've seen a grocer, a tailor, and a baker, all officers in one company. I don't say a grocer can't be as brave as another man; only selling candles behind a counter doesn't prepare one for commanding troops, as we found out fast enough when the Revolution came. Shall I tell you now

about our free parliament? There were four hundred of 'em in it, and the amount of talking they did was prodigious. They were at it six days a week during seven months out of the year, but I'm blessed if they ever did that for us" (M. Pochemolle snapped his fingers) " besides talking. We wanted new drains for Paris; they wouldn't give 'em us—said it cost too much. We wanted new streets—same story. We had in the Cité yonder a whole lump of courts and alleys where people could punch one another's heads out of their windows from opposite sides of the street. They bred filth and fever they did, and so swarmed with rascals, that if the police wanted to lay hold of anybody there, they had to go twenty and thirty together. You'd have thought it would have been a mercy to burn the whole place; but when it came to be a matter of knocking it down and building something new and clean instead, everybody cried, 'Oh, no,' and 'Where's the money to come from?' And, I tell you, I was as bad as the rest of 'em, for though I wasn't a member of the House of Deputies, yet when me and a lot

more of us, who had votes, used to get talking together about municipal business and other things we didn't understand, we were always saying 'No' to everything. I remember I used to come straight slap out with the 'No' before I knew what the question was about; it was a habit I'd got into. But at present all that's changed. Our Emperor he says, 'I'm here to rule,' and he does what's good for us: builds new streets and the like without taking counsel of anybody. And quite right too; for you see, gentlemen, let each man keep to his own walk, say I: I'm a famous good hand at selling cloth, calico, and ribbons, but I understand next to nothing about governing a country, and I don't see what any of you 'ud have to gain by letting me try."

Emile gave a shrug, Horace laughed.

"Well, that's candid and modest enough, anyhow, M. Pochemolle," he said. "I can't say you've quite convinced me. In any case, I daresay we shan't be the less good friends from thinking differently."

"No, no, that we shan't, sir: we shan't,

indeed," answered M. Pochemolle. "Only"—and here M. P., relapsing into a serious vein, cast another deprecating look towards the picture of the Revolutionists which he had abandoned on the table during his last harangue—"Only, trust me, gentlemen, and don't have anything to do with *them*. I've never known it lead to anything but fighting in the streets and imprisonment afterwards. If they were all cut out of the same cloth as your respected father, it might be another matter; but they're not. I knew a Republican who talked very handsome about the rights of man, and went away without paying my bill."

M. Pochemolle was very exhaustive when he got on the subject of his antipathy for revolutionists, and might have adduced numerous other instances of Republican shortcomings, had not a knock at the door interrupted him at this juncture, whilst a feminine voice from without cried — "Papa, you're wanted in the shop."

"Ah, that's my little girl, gentlemen," said M. Pochemolle; and opening the door, he revealed a bright young lady, who looked some seventeen

springs old, and was as pretty as clear hazel eyes, thick chestnut curls (young ladies wore curls in '54), red lips, and neat dressing could make her. She reddened slightly at finding herself before two strange messieurs, but was not otherwise shy, for she repeated to her sire what she had already said, and added that it was "*maman*" who had sent her up to say that Monsieur Macrobe and his daughter were downstairs. She begged the messieurs' pardon for disturbing them.

"Come here, Georgette, and let me introduce you to these gentlemen," said M. Pochemolle, with a not unpardonable look of fatherly pride. "Gentlemen, you only saw my wife and my son when you came to take your rooms the other day. Here is my daughter, who was away staying with her aunt then. Georgette, these are the MM. Gerold, sons of Monsieur Gerold, who faced the fire of revolutionary rifles to save your father's life.* Make your best curtsey to them. Gentle-

* N.B.—This was not quite historically correct, for the firing had ceased when M. G. picked up M. P., and it is not so sure that the latter would have died even if he had not been picked up at all. But gratitude may be pardoned for exaggerating.

men, this is my little Georgette—my pet child." And the worthy man led the young lady forward by the hand.

There was the most graceful of bows on the part of Horace Gerold, a not less civil but graver salutation on the part of Emile, and a demure curtsey with more blushing from Mdlle. Georgette. As Frenchmen are never at a loss for compliments, M. Horace, who was always collected in the face of the adverse sex, added a few pretty words, which seemed to please M. Pochemolle. Mdlle. Georgette herself cast her eyes on the ground with an almost imperceptible smile, as if the young man's compliments were not the first she had heard in her life.

"And now to business," exclaimed the draper. "Monsieur Macrobe and his young lady shan't be kept waiting long, my dear. Ah, gentlemen, you should see Mademoiselle Macrobe—a pearl, as we should have said in my young days, though I wouldn't exchange her for my Georgette; but she'll marry a duke or a king before she's done, I'd stake twenty bales of cloth on it. Then there's her father, too. Lord bless my soul, what

a long head! That's the kind of man to make a deputy of if you like. When he started in life he'd not two brass farthings to rub together, and no profession either, nor trade, nor teaching, so far as I could see; and yet now—why, he rolls his carriage, and I guess he won't live much longer in this quarter; he'll be emigrating towards the Champs Elysées or the Chaussée d'Antin: worse luck, for I shall lose a first-rate customer. A rising man, gentlemen, and thinks like me about politics; ay, it's not in his mouth you'd ever hear a word against the Emperor."

Mdlle. Georgette pulled her father's sleeve.

"M. Macrobe was in a hurry, father."

"Yes, my dear, coming; it won't do to offend M. Macrobe. Gentlemen, your servant; and if ever I can serve you, pray do me the honour to command me. Georgette, my pet, make another curtsey to the Messieurs Gerold."

And Mademoiselle Georgette did.

"Queer card!" laughed Horace, when the good M. Pochemolle had retreated.

"I hope we shall see as little as possible of

him for the future," answered the younger brother, drily. "I don't like such cynicism."

"Oh! cynicism is a big word," observed Horace. "I don't see anything cynic in the matter. We can't all think alike, you know."

Emile, for all his gentleness, was much less tolerant of hostile opinions than his brother. His was the nature out of which enthusiasts are moulded. He answered bitterly, "It's those sort of men who've helped to bring France to her present humiliation, and to send our father into exile. What wonder that there should be despots to treat us Frenchmen like slaves, when they are encouraged to it by such people as this—fellows who are ready to stand up for anybody in power, and to truckle to any government that will fill their tills."

"Whew—w—w!" whistled Horace. "Why look at things so gloomily, brother? Let's have freedom all round in the community. Think what it would be if everybody professed the same opinions—half the fun of life would be gone. Besides, it seems to me that a man who goes out

three or four times over, and risks his life for his opinions, however absurd these may be, has a right to be respected. It isn't the same as sticking to one's convictions only so long as they pay you."

Emile shook his head, unconvinced; but the discussion was not prolonged further, for Horace remembered the letter which the draper had brought, and which was lying unopened on the table. He had not looked at the address, but, on taking it, saw that it was in Manuel Gerold's handwriting. "It's from our father," he said, breaking the seal; and Emile having asked him to read aloud, he read as follows :—

"My dear Boys— "*Brussels, November*, 1854.

"*I have just received your letters, informing me that you were almost installed; and by same post a copy of the* Moniteur, *with your names amongst those of the new barristers admitted at the opening of the courts. It is a great satisfaction to me to feel that you are now fairly launched, both of you, in a profession where merit and hard work are more surely and liberally*

rewarded than in any other calling you could have chosen. The Bar will lead you to anything, though your progress must be at first slow; but you can afford to wait, and you are too sensible not to be aware that the only stable reputations are those which are acquired laboriously, by dint of patience and energy. Had I stayed longer in Paris, I should have introduced you to such few of my friends as still remain there. The number of them is terribly dwindled down, for most of us men of '48 have been scattered to the four winds; but there is Claude Febvre, one of the leaders of your profession, who has always been my firm ally —you will do well to call upon him. He will be sure to receive you kindly, and may be able to help you forward. In the press, Nestor Roche, the Editor of LA SENTINELLE, *is my old and valued friend. You might find him a little rough at first, but there is a heart of gold under his shagginess. He lives at the office of his paper, Rue Montmartre. I should think it not improbable that my bankers, MM. Lecoq and Roderheim, would wish to show you some civility, and*

ask you to their parties; in which case you would perhaps do well to go, for my relations with the firm have always been friendly. I hear that they have just taken a new partner, a man named Macrobe. If it is the same Macrobe I knew in 1848, *he will be likely to invite you too. He was a curious fellow, whom I could never quite understand. I believe he was a very warm Republican, acted once or twice on my electoral committees, and during the Provisional Government asked me several times to assist him in getting army and navy contracts. I mention this, because somehow he knew all about our family history, who I was, and the rest of it. I used to have some trouble in preventing him from trumping up my affairs in public, and paying me compliments. His object seemed to be to make friends with me; for though I never helped him in his contract-hunting, he always professed to be a great supporter of mine——"*

"Macrobe!" muttered Horace, breaking off. "Why, that's the name of M. Pochemolle's cus-

tomer downstairs. I wonder whether the two are the same."

"M. Pochemolle said his M. Macrobe was a Bonapartist."

"H'm, to-day — yes; but he said nothing about six years ago."

"If they *be* the same," remarked Emile, quietly, "M. Macrobe may spare himself the trouble of showing any civilities to *me*."

Horace said nothing, but took up the reading where he had left off, and finished the letter:—

"*. . . . Amongst my other quondam friends, I need not remind you of one whom you frequently saw come and visit me in old times: I mean M. Gribaud, who is now Minister of State. You remember the letter he wrote on the morrow of the coup-d'état, acquainting me with his sudden change of politics, and advising me to follow his example: you have not forgotten either the reply which I sent him. Under the circumstances, I scarcely think it probable that M. Gribaud will*

care to recollect he was once on such warm terms with us; and if he hears that you are in Paris, he will, doubtless, not trouble you with cards for any of those Ministerial soirées of his, which I hear are so much envied. Still, there is no knowing. My letter to him was not sharp: it was merely cold; and there is just a possibility that out of vanity or bravado, or from other motives difficult to analyze, he will invite you to go and witness his present splendour. Should this be the case, I confess it would please me to hear that you had held as completely aloof from this man as you would from any other individual who had shown himself openly dishonest. The world is indulgent towards men who have succeeded, and easily condones the villanies to which they may owe their triumphs; but for this reason it is the more important that strictly honourable men should build up a higher and sterner code of morality. You and I cannot harm M. Gribaud: neither would we if we could; but we can refuse him our homage, and so mark in our humble way that we draw no difference between the knavery

that leads to the hulks and that which leads to the Cabinet.

"Let me hear from both of you as often as possible without intruding too much on your time, and believe me,

"My dear Boys,

"Your ever affectionate Father,

"MANUEL GEROLD."

Whilst Horace Gerold was reading this letter to his brother, M. Pochemolle the draper, with his daughter Mdlle. Georgette, had returned to the shop on the ground floor, in order to attend on the important M. Macrobe. This gentleman —who at first sight looked like a weasel, upon closer inspection like a badger, and who, after mature examination, left one doubtful as to whether there were not a chimpanzee or two amongst his ancestors—was standing at one of the counters conversing volubly with the draper's wife, and holding up a piece of silk to the light to test the quality of the woof. The good Mdme. Pochemolle, stout, buxom, and blazing in scarlet cap-

strings, had been thrown into a sudden state of excitement and perspiration by the entry of this well-to-do but restless customer. M. Macrobe was one of those gentlemen who turn a shop upside down before they have been in it five minutes. At his bidding, M. Alcibiade Pochemolle, heir of M. Achille, had been made to haul down bales upon bales of silk, velvets, and satin, box after box of ribbons, until the counter was encumbered half a yard high with merchandise. The person for whose edification all this bustling and scurrying was supposed to take place was Mdlle. Angélique Macrobe, but it was her father who virtually did all the shopping. Mdlle. Angélique herself was a blue-eyed, blonde-haired, angel-faced child, who looked at people with a perpetual expression of soft wonder, and acquiesced in everything her sire proposed in a quiet, pleased sort of way, as if she quite appreciated the blessing of having somebody to take the trouble of thinking off her hands. In terming her "child," I must be understood to speak figuratively, for her pretty baby-face was eigh-

teen years old, and she was decked out in all the finery which proclaims a candidate in that most moral of competitions called the marriage-market.

M. Macrobe nodded when the draper came in, and, continuing to look through the silk, "'Morning, M. Pochemolle," he said. "Brought my daughter here to lay in winter stores. Goodish bit of silk this, but I don't believe in the dye. What's the news?"

In Macrobian phraseology, "What's the news?" had no reference whatever to the state of anybody's health or to occurrences in the political world. M. Macrobe was better informed than any man in Paris as to things politic, and the condition of people's health was a matter of great indifference to him. "What's the news?" was a query intended to elicit information as to what M. M. called "possible bargains." If there was anything to be sold anywhere at a loss to the seller—anything from the stock of a bankrupt tradesman to the "Stradivarius" of a starving fiddler or the pug-dog of a ruined actress,

M. Macrobe was the man to seize the occasion by the forelock. It was by constantly inquiring "What's the news?" during a course of thirty years that M. Macrobe had, bit by bit, picked up his fortune.

"I don't think there's much doing in the quarter, sir," answered the draper, hastening behind his counter, with a respectful salutation, first to the daughter, and then to the father. "Nothing in the way of news, I mean. Trade's brisk, and money's plentiful enough, though to be sure I heard somebody say that our neighbour the Armourer, three doors off, was in a bad way. Didn't you tell me something about it, my dear?" (this to his wife).

"Yes, indeed," answered Mdme. Pochemolle, looking up from the velvet she was spreading before Mdlle Angélique. "An honest man, too, and was getting on well in his business; but they say his son's not turned out what he should have done; his father's had to pay his debts, and this coming on the top of foolish gambling in the stocks, has put him in a low way."

"What's the name and address?" asked M. Macrobe.

"Quirot, Armourer and Curiosity Shop, Number 9 in this street," said the draper; and down at once went the name of Quirot, 9 Rue Ste. Geneviève, in the note-book which M. Macrobe had whipped out from the breast-pocket of his coat.

"Generally, something to be picked up in a curiosity shop," he muttered. "Now then, my pet, have you seen anything you like? Fairish velvet, Mdme. Pochemolle; this year's make; can tell it by the touch. We shall want three ball-dresses—eh, pet?—what do you say to a white, a pink and white, and a light blue,—blue's what goes best with your hair."

Mdlle. Angélique smiled and said: "Yes, papa."

"Measure out the silk, please, M. Pochemolle; and now twenty *mètres* of that velvet for a dinner-dress; ten of that white satin for a petticoat; enough white cashmere to make an opera cloak."

"Four *mètres*, M. Macrobe?"

"No, no: a goodish cloak like a shawl; something like the burnouses those Arab fellows wear: a thing to wrap one up all over—it's warmer and it's more *chic*. You must tell Mdme. Pochemolle yourself, pet, how much trimming 'll be wanted."

Mdlle. Angélique said, "Yes, papa," as before, and turned with a helpless look towards the draper's wife, to wonder how much trimming would be required for four dresses. Whilst Mdme. Pochemolle was doing her best to enlighten her on the weighty point, M. Macrobe had inquired for a second time of the draper whether he had any more news to give.

M. Pochemolle was up to his neck in silk, which was flooding the counter in waves a yard long as fast as he could measure it. He was full of merriment at the fine stroke of business he was doing that afternoon, so he answered with respectful joviality:

"Should you consider it news, sir, to hear that I've got two fresh lodgers?"

"Depends who they are," replied the financier, quite seriously.

"Their name's Gerold, sir."

"Gerold!" echoed M. Macrobe, quickly; "any relations to Manuel Gerold?"

"They're his sons, sir; M. Horace and M. Emile Gerold."

Out came M. Macrobe's pocket-book in a trice.

"What floor, M. Pochemolle? what's the age of the two young gentlemen? and what are they doing in Paris? Manuel Gerold's a most intimate friend of mine, banks with us: a curious character, but—ahem!—very well off—very."

A little astonished, M. Pochemolle informed his customer that his lodgers were on the third floor, that they had not been with him long, that they were quiet young gentlemen, and that their profession was the law. "Wasn't aware that you knew them, M. Macrobe," he added; "I was just talking with them, when Georgette came up to fetch me; but they didn't say anything at the mention of your name."

"Nor do I know *them*," answered M. Macrobe, promptly jotting down, *Horace and Emile Gerold 3rd floor over Pochemolle's, Rue Sainte Geneviève.*

"Manuel Gerold's the man I know; but his sons and I will soon scrape acquaintance. Angélique my child, remember the Messieurs Gerold, and tell your aunt, when you get home, to have them down on her list for our next party. But stay: they live in this house: why shouldn't I go up and drop a card whilst you're making out your bill, M. Pochemolle?" and M. Macrobe fumbled in his pockets for a pair of black kid-gloves, which did duty with him on ceremonious occasions.

"I am sure they will be delighted to see you, sir," observed the draper. And the worthy man spoke as he thought; for, indeed, it seemed to him impossible that anybody should be otherwise than delighted at the sight of an individual so eminently prosperous as M. Macrobe. The latter drew on his gloves, gave his hat a brush with the sleeve of his coat, and walked out; but he was spared the trouble of climbing up three flights of stairs, for he had scarcely left the shop when the two sons of his most intimate friend emerged from the *porte-cochère* of the house in person. They had finished their decorating upstairs, and were on

their way to make a few calls before dinner. M. Pochemolle noticed them through the window, went out and stopped them as they were passing his shop, and then ran after M. Macrobe crying: "Those were the MM. Gerold, sir, whom you met going in."

In another half minute M. Macrobe, with a most friendly smirk on his acute physiognomy, was holding out his hand to the younger of the two brothers. He had mistaken him for the elder, on account of his graver face and stronger build. "Monsieur le Marquis de Hautbourg, I'm truly glad that hazard should have thrown me in your way," he began; "hope I see you well? Only just heard you were in Paris."

"My name's not Marquis of Hautbourg," answered Emile very distantly. "Here is my elder brother."

"And I call myself Horace Gerold," continued the other, not less distantly, but with rather more curiosity in his tone.

"Ah! yes; I perfectly understand; aversion to titles; most respectable prejudice; am a

Republican myself to the backbone. Your father and I are great friends, M. Horace: my name is Macrobe."

"Oh, you are M. Macrobe," said Horace, amused.

"At your service, M. Horace: Macrobe, of 'Lecoq, Roderheim and Macrobe,' your bankers. Dear me, what a likeness between father and sons. Do me the pleasure to step in a moment, M. Horace and M. Emile, and let me introduce my daughter to you."

From the moment when he heard the name Macrobe, Emile set his face rigidly and answered only in monosyllables. Horace suffered himself to be led into the shop by the arm and presented in due form to Mademoiselle Angélique. The draper's daughter, who remembered the pretty compliment with which the well-looking young gentleman had honoured her some twenty minutes before, raised her eyes slyly from the parcel she was tying, to see whether he was going to publish a second edition of this flattery for Mademoiselle Macrobe. But nothing save the usual courtesies

took place. Perhaps Horace Gerold was too much struck by Mademoiselle Angélique's beauty to say anything; for in truth to those who saw her for the first time, the sweet candid-faced girl appeared the incarnation of all that was lovely and loveable in woman. Her curtsey to the two brothers was a model in its way, Mademoiselle Angélique being an adept pupil of M. Cellarius, her dancing-master.

M. Macrobe, not unmindful of the effect created by his daughter's beauty, followed up his advantages by at once inviting Horace and Emile — but especially Horace—to come and dine on an early day. "Quiet people we are," he said, with a bluffness not quite suited to the weas'ly mobility of his eyes and the foxlike acuity of his nose. "I live here in this quarter not far off from you—Rue de Seine, opposite the Luxembourg. Name a day, and we'll have as snug a dinner as you could get in Paris. Twelve at table, you know, just enough to be cosy, and I'll ask a solicitor or two: it's good for young barristers to be friends with solicitors."

Though the invitation was cordial, Horace politely regretted that the number of his pressing engagements would prevent him from naming a day; and there he was going to stop, but—after a second's hesitation and a glance in the direction of Mademoiselle Angélique—he promised he would do himself the pleasure of calling. Emile, more wary, promised nothing; but the assurance of the elder was enough for M. Macrobe, who appeared satisfied.

For the last five minutes the fingers of the entire Pochemolle family had been nimbly at work, folding, rolling, parcelling, and stringing. M. Alcibiade Pochemolle, the cashier of the firm, now went to his high desk and totted up the items of the various purchases into one grand-total, smearing the whole with sand by way of conclusion, under pretence of blotting it. "Shall we book to your account, M. Macrobe?" he asked.

"No, I closed my account last autumn," said the financier; "for the future I pay ready money. Knock off the discount."

This was at once done, for the house of Poche-

molle and Son transacted business on the fine old principle of deducting 6 per cent. for cash. The bill was a heavy one; but I daresay M. Macrobe was not altogether grieved. He read aloud the total—2,785 *francs* 75 *centimes*—with some ostentation, drew out three bank-notes of 1,000 francs each, and paid without a word. This feat, however, reminded him once more that Manuel Gerold banked with his firm: so, taking Horace by the button of his coat, he drew him a step aside, and said: "It's we, you know, who are to pay you your allowance, 3,000 francs a year; but I've been a young man myself and know what it is.—If ever you're hard up, don't forget where I live: my cash-box is not like the bank, it's open at all hours—to my friends."

"Thank you; I never contract debts which I have no prospects of paying," replied Horace curtly.

A few years before, whilst he was still a law-student, M. Macrobe's offer might have stirred him to emotion; at present, he felt inclined to resent it as an impertinence, the more so as he recalled the passage of his father's letter, in which

the acquaintance of the financier with the Gerold family concerns was hinted at.

But M. Macrobe, who knew nothing about any passage in a letter, grinned at the young man's stiff answer, and, with a leer that was intended to be arch, said: "Oh, of course, of course, M. Horace, that's the proper reply to make—never accept a loan till you want it. Only, mind what I say, and if ever you do want, come to me. All in friendship, you know; no securities or anything of that kind—plain word of honour, and down goes the money."

And with this he turned on his heel, leaving no time for a second refusal.

Mademoiselle Angélique had risen at this juncture, and was preparing to leave the shop as soon as her father should be ready. Seeing the financier's brougham standing outside, Horace could scarcely do less than offer the young lady his arm to help her into the carriage. Even had he wished to evade performing this civility, he would have been unable to do so, for M. Macrobe, in going to the counter to get his bill receipted,

cried, "I am sure, my dear, M. Horace will kindly give you his arm whilst Madame Pochemolle counts me my change."

And so the two young people walked out together, preceded by the Pochemolles male, both of them freighted with cardboard boxes and packets.

Mdlle. Angélique scarcely touched Horace's sleeve with her dainty gloved hand; and, in answer to a remark of his respecting the coldness of the weather, replied, "Yes, Monsieur, it is," with the same depth of earnestness with which she would have subscribed to an article of the Christian faith. Once she was safely stowed into the brougham, and had mildly thanked Horace, M. Macrobe came bustling out amidst the bows and murmured benedictions of the Pochemolles, and took farewell of the brothers. He did not attempt to shake hands with Emile, for he was a perspicacious man was M. Macrobe, and easily discerned where he was not welcome; but he shook hands warmly with Horace, and repeated: "Mind, M. Horace, Rue de Seine; always delighted to see you—Angélique too."

And with this, not forgetful of business, he directed his coachman to stop at the curiosity shop of the ill-starred M. Quirot, out of whom he hoped to be able to screw a bargain.

When the carriage had rolled off, the first remark of Horace to his brother was: "That's the most beautiful girl I've ever seen in my life; if she's as intelligent as she's lovely, she must be a paragon."

Precisely at the same moment M. Macrobe was discoursing to his offspring in this strain: "My pet, that M. Horace with the light moustaches is a marquis, and, at the death of his father, who is a little cracked—in fact, entirely cracked—he will be a duke, and have one of the finest fortunes in France. I'd no idea we should meet him in Paris in this way; but, since I've had the luck, why, I'll get him to come and see us, and—h'm—you'll try and be civil to him, won't you, pet?"

To which speech Mademoiselle Angélique replied with a smile of placid obedience, such as a seraph might have envied: "Yes, papa."

CHAPTER VI.

A FIRST BRIEF.

Horace Gerold did not immediately redeem his promise of going to call on the financier. After thinking during a day or two of the sweet face and tiny hand of Mademoiselle Angélique, that young lady and her sire went out of his head, and it was fully three months before he renewed acquaintance with them. In the meanwhile, M. Macrobe spared neither letters nor invitation-cards, and when these were declined, he came himself to pay personal visits; but he never found the brothers at home. The fact is, they were hard workers. Ambitious to push their way quickly, they slaved at their trade as men must slave who wish to succeed. This is the life they led:—Up at seven, they fagged at law-

books—but principally the Code—till eleven; at eleven they went out and breakfasted at their *table-d'hôte*, which took them till about a quarter to twelve; breakfast over, they walked down together to the Palace of Justice, put on their caps and gowns, and went from court to court, listening to cases until six; in the evenings, after dinner, they generally spent a couple of hours in the Café Procope, reading the papers and talking politics with fellow-barristers; and the remainder of their time was devoted to the same employment as the early morning: that is, either in studying law or in getting up history —one of the most indispensable branches of knowledge in a country where barristers have so often to defend political offenders. The time spent in the courts was that which seemed most arduous to them both, and here a marked difference in their characters became discernible. Unlike his brother, Emile seldom went into the criminal courts. He usually selected the most complicated case on the Civil Roll, and sat the trial out with stolid patience from first to last,

often foregoing his breakfast to be earlier in his place, and taking notes with an unflagging attention which earned him the admiration of some of the judges, by whom he soon came to be noticed as "that young man who never goes to sleep." Frequently it happened that Emile was the only barrister—and, indeed, the only spectator—present, besides the counsel, and these last would marvel to see him follow all the mazes of some terrifically intricate argument concerning a disputed boundary wall, an unintelligible passage in a codicil, or a right of way over a footpath. They would have been much more astonished had they known that Emile Gerold generally studied these arguments a second time when he got home in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, making it a principle, once he had taken up a case, to master it thoroughly. Horace could not have stood this uphill kind of labour. The cases he selected in preference were those which promised most excitement. The Court of Assize, the Sixth and Seventh Chambers of Correctional Police, during press trials, and the Third Civil

Court, pending a suit *en séparation de corps et de biens*—these were his places of favourite resort, though his object was not to recreate himself by listening to scandal-mongering witnesses, for he commonly went out of court whilst evidence was being taken, and only came in during the speeches of counsel *pro* and *con*, and during the summing-up. Whilst his brother was laying down a solid stratum of law-experience, and learning to be a close, persevering reasoner, Horace was acquiring the gift of a ready tongue—not very strong in argument, but clever at that headforemost kind of rhetoric which capsizes a jury, and drags the public along with it. He was the disciple and admirer of the half-dozen leading barristers who held public prosecutors in check, kept a whole court fizzing with excitement whilst they spoke, and were known to the outside world through the medium of their daguerreotype portraits, purchaseable on the Boulevards for twenty francs.

One day Horace had been listening to a remarkable orator of this school, who, with much credit to himself and great advantage to society, had been

rescuing an assassin from the scaffold, and he was walking along the gallery which leads from the Assize Court to the Salle des Pas Perdus (French Westminster Hall), musing what a fine thing it was to set twelve jurymen whimpering in concert, when, on reaching the hall, he was almost run into by a man with a preposterous-looking hat, who was wandering about in a purposeless sort of way, evidently seeking somebody, but not paying much attention to whither his steps led him. This man's hat at once stamped him as being out of the ruck of common humanity. It was a hat such as could only figure on the head of one who despised conventionalities, and was wont to pursue his own course in life, undeterred by sarcasm. It was a tall hat, made of silk, and towering into a peak, with an altogether obsolete brim, twice as wide as those ordinarily in vogue, and standing straight out from the crown of the hat without the least curve, like the balcony of a window. Underneath this head-dress gleamed the face of a man of sixty, round and smooth-shaven, all but the

moustache, which hung grey and wild to below the chin. The eyes were bright and intelligent, though cold and searching. The nose, mouth, chin, and lips were all large and boldly-delineated, denoting a man who held pretty grimly by his opinions once he had formed them, and was no more to be bantered out of a crotchet than to be intimidated out of a resolution. There are faces like this on which one may read character as in an open book. The man was dressed, regardless of fashion, in wide loose clothes; he sported a broad collar, turned down over his coat, and leaving a good deal of his throat bare. His hands were in his trousers-pockets.

He made no apology to Horace for nearly running into him, but, seeing the latter was a barrister, he said: "Can you tell me where I'm likely to find Maître * Claude Febvre?"

Claude Febvre was the barrister upon whom Manuel Gerold had recommended his sons to

* Maître (Master) is the substitute for Monsieur in the case of French Barristers; the title is only used at the Law Courts.

call. The brothers had done so and were on very good terms with the great pleader, who had promised to take them in hand and help them forward as soon as he could. At that moment Claude Febvre happened to be in the provinces, standing counsel in a suit at Bordeaux, so that Horace was able to inform the stranger that it was no use looking for him at the Palace.

"At Bordeaux is he?" responded the man with the hat. "Well, it doesn't much matter; I should have retained him because he's a friend of mine; but my affair is as plain as a mill-board: anybody can plead it." He fixed his eyes on Horace Gerold, surveyed him half a minute as if taking measure of his quality, and then said: "Have you many briefs on hand, young man?"

Horace Gerold had not a single brief on hand. He was just then awaiting the return of this very Claude Febvre to make his début at the bar in the character of second junior in an action for damages against a railway company. He coloured, but, the sense of his professional dignity rising uppermost within him, he answered quietly: "If

you want assistance, Monsieur, I daresay I shall be able to give it you."

"What's your name?" asked the stranger.

"My name's Horace Gerold."

"Ah! I thought I'd seen those eyes somewhere. Come you along with me, young man; we two are friends. Have you ever heard of Nestor Roche?"

"Yes, indeed," exclaimed Horace, stopping. "My brother and I called upon him twice by our father's special desire, but he was not at home either time — that is," added Horace smiling, "he was at home both times, but once when we called at twelve we were told he was in bed, and the other time, when we went at three, he was breakfasting, so we merely left cards."

"Yes, so would you be in bed at twelve if you were editing a paper till six in the morning," rejoined the man with the hat queerly. "But give me your hand. I was glad to see your honest cards on the table; next time you write to your father tell him from me that there's not

a man I esteem more under heaven. Come along now and I'll tell you about this case; you shall plead it for me."

It was a very hearty grip, something like a bear's, which he gave the young man. He then slipped his arm through his, and the two went together to a form in a corner of the Hall, where they could talk over matters in quiet. Horace, though a little chagrined that a man so worthy as Nestor Roche was known to be should wear so eccentric a hat, was pleased to have met his father's friend, and the prospect of now handling a first brief added very naturally to his elation.

"Look here," began Nestor Roche, drawing a copy of his paper, *La Sentinelle*, from his pocket. "My gazette's got into hot water. It would never get into hot water if I alone wrote in it; for though there's not a line I pen but what's against the Government, I'm an old hand, you see, and know how to steer clear. However, some of the others are not so wary, and the other day one of my young ones, Max Delormay, who does the

'Echoes,' wrote this note, which I didn't read carefully enough before it went into print; so that now we've got an action for libel on us in the Correctional Court. It's all my fault, for Delormay wouldn't be supposed to know; in fact, nobody does know what's libel, and what's not, until he's written twenty years. Of course we shall be convicted, so I don't ask you to try for an acquittal. The *Sentinelle*, an opposition journal edited by a Republican, and tried before three Imperialist judges without jury, for attacking an Imperialist stock-jobber, has no more chance of being let off than if I'd been caught in the act of firing at the Emperor's carriage. Delormay and I shall each get three months' imprisonment: that's what we shall get: there'll be a fine into the bargain; and as the plaintiff has laid his damages at a hundred thousand francs, I expect the judges will award at least ten thousand. All that, however, is of no consequence: those are the risks of journalism, like the breakages in a china-shop; and I shall be able to edit my paper just as well in the prison of Sainte Pélagie

as in the Rue Montmartre. But I'll tell you what I wish you to do. You must show in your speech that we've no personal rancour against this fellow whom Delormay has attacked; that we have merely hit at him as one of a disreputable class who are growing rank as weeds under this precious Second Empire of ours. Make of this affair one of commercial morality. Argue that it is the duty of the Press to expose people like this fellow, who rob the public just as truly as if they stood on a highway road and rifled the pockets of the passers-by. These are the facts: — A very loose fish named—but look, here is the note; you can read it for yourself."

Nestor Roche pointed with his finger to a passage of *La Sentinelle* in which figured the following lines:—

"We have noticed two very interesting items of news in yesterday's *Moniteur:* the first announcing that a certain Monsieur Isidore Macrobe has been appointed Knight of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, and the second proclaiming through the advertisement columns that the same

M. Isidore Macrobe has been elected one of the directors of the new *Société du Crédit Parisien.* We have no wish to say anything unpleasant either to the Members of the Legion of Honour or to the shareholders of the *Crédit;* but before congratulating the former on their new colleague, and the latter on their fresh director, we confess we should be glad to know whether this M. Isidore Macrobe is the same Isidore Macrobe who was declared a bankrupt in Paris in 1835, in London three years later, and in Brussels in 1842; whether he is the same M. Macrobe who, having returned to Paris in 1843, singularly well-off after his third bankruptcy, at once revealed himself to the world as Treasurer of a *Compagnie Générale du Pavage Departemental,* which Company never paved anything, but collapsed in 1845 — that is, some months after M. Macrobe had with striking foresight resigned his post of Treasurer, and, as we understand, sold his shares at a most advantageous premium; whether it was this M. Macrobe again who, in 1846, bloomed out afresh as Treasurer of the *Société de l'Eclairage Rustique,* which did rather less in the way of lighting than the

other had done in the way of paving, and from which M. Macrobe retired, as before, in time to avoid the catastrophe which soon after befell the shareholders; and finally, whether it is this M. Macrobe who, in 1848, being a zealous Republican, obtained of the Provisional Government a contract for supplying all the country mairies with plaster statues of the Republic, which statues have never been beheld to this day, although there is no mention of M. Macrobe having ever refunded the twenty thousand francs which he received on account. It is a correspondent who has suggested that we should ask these questions, and we do so in the hope that they will elicit an answer. If all the Isidore Macrobes just alluded to form but one individual, it will remain with us to speculate what can be the claims of this gentleman to be rewarded with an order of merit, and to act as director to a company which we had hitherto believed to be a *bonâ fide* enterprise."

Horace had not been able to suppress a slight exclamation at reading the name of Macrobe, and

when he had finished he said to Nestor Roche: "I know this man a little; he's a partner in the firm of Lecoq and Roderheim, with which my father banks."

"Oh, you know him: will that prevent your giving him a dressing?" inquired the Editor.

"Not the least," rejoined Horace. "If all this is true, the man deserves to be shown up, and I think M. Delormay was quite right in exposing him?"

"Well, I don't quite know about that," grumbled Nestor Roche, removing his monumental covering and rubbing the grey, bristly head under it with a perplexed air. "You must stick to that line of arguing in your defence; but between us both, if newspapers set themselves to unmasking all the Macrobes in Paris, they'd have to issue a special edition every morning. I shouldn't have let in the paragraph at all if I'd been awake when I read it; but Delormay generally takes things so quietly that I didn't expect to see him fire out in this way, and so glanced at his note with only half an eye. The whole thing's true, though; for I

remember all about those plaster statues of Liberty which were to replace the busts of Louis Philippe; but the fact of its being true doesn't matter, for French law, as you've learned, won't allow a defendant in libel to furnish proof. No, the job's a bad one for us; and it'll be useless to ask for any mitigation of penalty; but if you think you can manage it, I shouldn't be sorry to see M. Macrobe get a first-class lashing. Since he's rammed us into a corner, he may as well have the benefit of all the mauling we can give him."

Horace assented, told the Editor briefly all he knew concerning M. Macrobe—which was very little—and inquired for what day the trial was fixed. It was down for hearing on the following Friday, that is, four days off, it being then a Monday; but as postponements of a week or fortnight can generally be obtained without difficulty as many as three or four times over, there was no actual reason why the case should come on for another six weeks.

"I wouldn't ask for too many postponements, though, if I were you," remarked Nestor Roche.

"The judges are always as sulky as possible with our trade; and, besides, it doesn't look well asking for adjournments in a libel case: it gives the plaintiff the opportunity of bellowing that we're afraid of him. Be ready to face the fellow as soon as you can—without adjourning at all if possible."

Horace, not sorry that his first client should be as impatient of delay as he, readily promised that he would have the case at his fingers' ends by Friday morning. He was not likely to spare the midnight oil over a maiden brief, and would have worked without any sleep at all for the next three days if needful. Nestor Roche gave him the address of his solicitor, with a laconic recommendation, however, not to follow the instructions of that luminary, solicitors being temporizers by nature, addicted to adjournments and devoid of taste for stand-up fighting. He added that he himself was always to be seen from three in the afternoon to three in the morning inclusively; and matters being thus pleasantly settled, he observed he must be off, gave another grip to Horace,

buried his hands in his pockets and was gone, with as much unconcern as if he had been ordering a new pair of shoes, instead of preparing to face three months' imprisonment.

That day was marked with a white stone by the two brothers, and assuredly they are the happiest days in our lives, those on which we first see our way to earning our own living. A first article or a first picture accepted, a maiden brief, a maiden fee—these are joys which may well console those whose lot it is to struggle, for not having been born with golden spoons in their mouths. Emile was as elated at his brother's piece of luck as Horace could be; he made no doubt that now his brother had got a foot in the stirrup he would quickly ride away to fame. But this was not all. Emile did not confine himself to mere congratulations; he was anxious, so far as in him lay, to help in assuring Horace's success. During the whole evening he pored over libel cases in records of French jurisprudence, and the following morning slipped out early, without saying where he was going, and remained absent till dinner-time.

When he returned he handed his brother a paper, covered with precise notes as to M. Isidore Macrobe's career. He had spent his day in the public library of the Rue Richelieu, consulting the files of the French and Belgian *Moniteurs* and of the *London Gazette*, and had acquired proof indisputable as to the worthy financier's three bankruptcies. Further, he had been to call upon two members of the Provisional Government of 1848, and both had assured him that the details as to the statue contract were perfectly correct—though one of them added that the unlucky *Sentinelle* had placed itself altogether in the wrong box, for that suspicious bankruptcies, suspicious stock-jobbing, and suspicious practice with regard to Government contracts, were only accounted stigmas when a man was ruined by them. This, too, was Manuel Gerold's rather sorrowful view. Horace had written to give him an account of the case, and on the very morning of the trial he received an answer, in which the old tribune said: "I am not sorry, my dear boy, that you should win your spurs in defending my

old friend Nestor Roche, neither am I in any way concerned that you should be obliged to attack that curious M. Macrobe, well-wisher of mine though he profess to be. At the same time, let me warn you that, from the world's point of view, your clients have not a leg to stand on. Society—especially Second Empire society—will always be averse to having ugly truths raked up against a man who has made his way. Nothing that you can say against M. Macrobe will affect his reputation in the least. He will leave the court with a high head, and pocket poor Nestor Roche's damages with as much coolness as if the money were owing to him."

There was another person whose opinions in the matter of the libel leaned much rather towards law than equity, and that was the excellent M. Pochemolle. Coming home on the eve of the trial, after receiving one or two final instructions from the Editor, Horace was stopped by the honest draper, who dragged him by the sleeve into his shop, and said, in tones of dismay: "Dear me, M. Horace, what's this I hear—that you're going

to speak against M. Macrobe? It can't be true, come now——"

And Madame Pochemolle, behind her counter, chimed in with the exclamation: "Such a civil young gentleman as you are, M. Horace; I'm sure you wouldn't say harm against anybody."

It took the good couple some time to understand that a man could actually reconcile it with his conscience to assail so extremely respectable a person as M. Macrobe. It was Mademoiselle Georgette who had first discovered in the paper the paragraph which said: "*The trial of* La Sentinelle, *in the person of its editor, printer, and of M. Max Delormay, a member of the staff, for libelling M. Macrobe, of the banking firm Lecoq, Roderheim, and Macrobe, will take place on Friday. Maître Giboulet is retained for the plaintiff, Maître Horace Gerold will appear for the defence.*"—For a while M. Pochemolle had clung to the saving hope that this might be a mistake, or that there were two Horace Gerolds, or that the names had been interverted; the correct reading being—Giboulet for the defence

and Gerold for the plaintiff; but when Horace avowed without a blush that the announcement was perfectly correct, M. Pochemolle called to mind the words of solemn warning he had uttered to the young men at the sight of David's picture, and reflected that the present incident was a realization of his worst forebodings. Nothing but association with Republicans could ever have seduced a well-nurtured and generally quiet youth into taking part with a subversive print against a gentleman who paid ready-money, and had, as it was affirmed, at least two hundred thousand francs a year. He hoped that no harm would come of it, but it was his experience that bad beginnings generally led to evil ends. So spake M. Pochemolle, his wife assenting with a sigh, and had it not been for Mademoiselle Georgette, Horace would have been condemned *nem. con.* by the worthy household. But Georgette Pochemolle, who was accustomed to speak her mind, and who, besides, felt an interest in the two rising barristers (as what young woman will not feel an interest in a couple of young men who pass by the window

several times a day, and on each occasion favour her with a bow?)—Georgette Pochemolle quietly confronted her scandalized father, in defence of the incriminated youth: "For," said she, "what if this M. Macrobe deserves to be spoken against, why shouldn't M. Horace do it as much as anybody else?" A mild query, which caused M. Pochemolle to stand bolt still and answer, with all the dignity he could command: "Mademoiselle, I am surprised that you should join in the cry against one of your father's most valued customers. When you grow to be older, you will learn that those who become rich are always pursued by the animosity of the envious. Let it be enough for you that M. Macrobe enjoys my personal esteem and that of his sovereign, who has just rewarded him with the Cross of Honour."

Georgette went on with her stitching, but scolding never yet convinced a woman.

It must be confessed, however, that neither his father's predictions nor the draper's lamentations much damped Horace Gerold. Of all the godsends which could befall to a French barrister in

the year 1854 that most to be prayed for was a brief in a political trial. At a time when public meetings were prohibited, when people held their tongues under double chain and padlock, when even the parliamentary debates were a secret, it was something for a man to have the opportunity of standing up in a full court and giving vent to whatever pent-up liberalism there might be in him. Not a few barristers would have cheerfully bartered one of their ears for such a chance; for, if taken good advantage of, it meant simply reputation, honour, and possibly fortune. No great talent, in fact no talent at all, was needed; all that was required was boldness. Talent is of use when a cause has to be won, but in 1854 the results of all press trials were known beforehand. Barristers accepted the defence of prosecuted journalists, not with any hope of obtaining an acquittal—*that* they were aware would have been an idle dream—but with the view to making sensation speeches, which should bring them into notice. Horace was in no way ignorant of this particular, and the more he thought over the matter the more clearly did

he perceive that Nestor Roche had thrown an occasion in his way such as did not often fall to a pleader of but a few months' standing. It is true that the trial in which he was engaged was not strictly a political one, being virtually nothing more than an action for imprisonment and damages brought by a private person. But political is an elastic word: in France, where one of the parties to a suit is an Imperialist and the other a Radical, the judge would be a phœnix who kept politics out of the question.

Need it be said that Horace was up with the dawn on the morning of the famous Friday; and shall we blame him if he paid much more than ordinary attention to his toilet? Always neat—a dandy even for the Bar—he put himself this time into black, eschewing the grey trousers habitual to the younger members of his profession; and selected the stiffest of his shirt-collars, no doubt so as to be on a level with the luminaries of the judgment seat. He had not slept very soundly the night before, neither had Emile. The latter, quietly busy to the last, had remained working

till long after midnight, and had compiled about twenty foolscap pages of notes, full of intelligent arguments and precedents drawn from past libel cases. "You would have managed this case better than I," said Horace affectionately, as he glanced through this labour of love. Emile had neglected nothing: the notes were plainly written in the darkest ink, and blank spaces were left between each, so that they might more easily catch the eye if consulted in a hurry; with patient thoughtfulness an appendix had been added to help in ready reference to the rest of the work.

Just as the two brothers were going to set out, soon after nine, Georgette Pochemolle came running up with a letter. By the way, it was not Mademoiselle Georgette's business to bring up letters, but the postman, when pressed for time, frequently made mistakes and left lodgers' letters in the shop along with the Pochemolle correspondence, instead of delivering them to the *concierge* at the private door. On such occasions Mademoiselle Georgette, with her father's sanction,

would often run upstairs with the missive, and be rewarded with, "How good of you to take so much trouble," or "We're really ashamed to put you to so much inconvenience," which would make her sometimes say to herself that these Messieurs Gerold, especially the eldest — for it was commonly he who spoke—were certainly very well-bred young men.

The letter Mademoiselle Georgette brought was rather a curious one: it came from the imperturbable M. Macrobe:—

"My dear M. Horace—

"*I just hear that you are retained for the defence in my affair with the* Sentinelle. *Bad business for Roche—I am talking of the libel.—He'll be knocked down in heavy damages, and I reckon the costs will be biggish; but I'm glad we've got an honourable adversary like you against us. Of course the whole story of the* Sentinelle *is a lie; but I don't ask you to believe it from me. I only write to prove there's no rancour. We who've made money are accustomed to hitting from those*

who haven't—I don't say that for you, but for Roche.

"I shake your hand cordially,

" ISIDORE MACROBE."

"By-the-by, you've not yet kept your promise about calling. You know we've removed since I last saw you. Our present address is 294 *Avenue des Champs Elysées. Easily find the house: two statues of naked boys with goats'-legs playing on the flute outside."*

Horace crumpled up this calm epistle, laughing, and threw it into the fire.

"He's cool enough at all events," said Emile with a smile. And the two brothers set off together for the Palace.

CHAPTER VII.

A FIRST SPEECH.

A ROOM forty feet long by twenty, wainscoted with light oak, and papered above the wainscot in green, studded with gold bees. Twelve rows of seats on either side of a passage running down the whole length of the room, and leading to a dais raised two feet from the floor. On the dais, a table covered with green baize, and three arm-chairs. To the left of the dais a low pulpit, to the right a dock. On the walls, in guise of ornament, a clock and a bust, in marble, of the sovereign—the bust faces the dock, the clock shows its face to the pulpit. Over the dais a life-sized picture of the Saviour on the cross, the arms stretched out in ghastly whiteness, and the forehead bloody from the crown of thorns. Add to

this a fire-stove near the door, three glistening pewter inkstands with three black blotting-books on the dais table, a fourth inkstand and blotting-book in the pulpit, and you will have the Sixth Chamber of Correctional Police.

From ten o'clock till four, five days out of the week, thieves and swindlers are put to confusion there. On Fridays the thieves and swindlers only remain in possession till noon; at noon come the journalists, and the procession of them generally lasts till six. Sometimes the journalists are too numerous to be disposed of in an afternoon, and then the Wednesday is considerately set apart for them. Justice shows her respect for the Press by making the thieves and swindlers wait.

From 1852 to 1860 Press trials took place with closed doors: that is, none but the defendants, plaintiffs, witnesses, and members of the Bar were allowed to be present. Things were conducted snugly *en famille;* and when the trial was over, the papers were allowed to publish the indictment and the judgment, but not the speeches for the defence, or the depositions of the witnesses.

This last precaution, intended to safeguard the public against the spirit of partiality that might accrue from hearing both sides of the question, is in force to this day; but the regulation which kept the public out of court has been kindly abrogated. There is nothing now to prevent people from going to admire how justice is meted out to the pen tribe.

Thus, in 1854, the trial of Macrobe *v.* Roche ought to have been pleaded with three judges, Monsieur the Public Prosecutor, and a few desultory barristers, for sole spectators. So said the law, and so said the besworded Municipal Guards, who kept watch at the door, inflexibly keeping back the curious, and disdaining blandishments, supplications, and bribes alike. But in France laws have from all time been much easier to make than to enforce, and there was one method by which one could elude both the vigilance of the "municipals" without the court and that of the ushers within. The way was simply this: to shave off one's beard and moustache, if one possessed such appendages, and to

hire a barrister's cap, gown, and bands, of the robe-man at the Palace. It was impossible that the "municipals" could know the features of all the members of the Bar; the shaven or plain-whiskered face, with the cap and gown, were their only clues; they had no power to keep out barristers, and so in you walked. Press trials were such an attraction that a good many journalists kept themselves permanently shaved, so as to have the privilege of going to hear their compeers condemned of a Friday. The judges more than suspected the infringement, but were obliged to wink at it. One of them—a cantankerous judge—had tried to put a stop to the evil; but the "municipals" at the door are not a pre-eminently intelligent body, and when told to be extra careful, they kept out real barristers as well as spurious. This had led to complications. The Conseil de l'Ordre des Avocats had remonstrated, and demanded an apology. Judges don't like to apologize; and so the upshot of it was, that the shaven journalists remained masters of the situation.

On Friday afternoons the Sixth Chamber was always crowded. When Horace Gerold arrived there punctually at twelve with his brother, he found it so crammed that there would not have been standing room for a magpie.

You may be sure his heart throbbed as he threaded his way down the gloomy passage that led from the Salle des Pas Perdus to the grim sanctum of the Correctional Police, over the door of which might be read this significant couplet :—

Hic scelerum ultrices Pœnæ posuere tribunal ;
Sontibus unde timor, civibus inde salus.*

He thought everybody was staring at him, and a good many of his legal brethren *were* doing so ; for they deemed him a lucky dog, wondered rather sceptically whether he would do justice to his luck, and, in any case, envied him cordially. The case had brought together not only a mob of journalists, but a powerful squad of moneyed men, many of whom

* The Court labelled with this inscription has since become that of Correctional Appeal ; the Sixth Chamber has been removed into the new buildings in the Cour de la Sainte Chapelle.

had resorted early to the cap, gown, and bands expedient and had managed to squeeze into court. The remainder thronged outside with such journalists—and they were the majority—who were too well pleased with their moustaches to sacrifice them, and with those of the genuine barristers, who, less fortunate than their pseudo-colleagues, had been unable to find a place. Money-men, pen-men, and law-men were making a fearful hubbub, and exchanging observations, interjections, and epigrams at the top of their voices, as the fashion is amongst Frenchmen. Everybody was perfectly good-humoured. The gentlemen of the Bourse laughed very pleasantly at the squibs of wit launched by the gentlemen of the Quill against the profession of stock and share jobbing; but they retaliated with genial irony, and the ejaculations "Oh! oh!" "Ah! ah!" succeeded each other apace, when a burly journalist, known throughout Paris as the editor of an extremely lively print conducted on the strictest catch-penny principles, put in a remark about the sacerdotal mission of the Press. It

should be owned, that the eyes of the corpulent editor twinkled somewhat as he ventured upon these tall words, which in his mouth were hailed as an amazingly good joke by the bystanders.

In the centre of one of the noisiest groups the two brothers descried the stupendous hat of Nestor Roche, his baggy clothes and naïvely grim face. The editor of *La Sentinelle* was talking about some recent Crimean battle and evincing the most supreme indifference as to what was going to happen to him personally that afternoon. Nevertheless, on catching sight of the Gerolds, he held out a hand to each, and introduced them without more ado to a good-looking companion of his, whom he announced as "the young one who has shoved us into the wasp's nest—Max Delormay." The brothers had both been several times to the office of the *Sentinelle* during the two or three past days, and had quite made the acquaintance of M. Roche; but they had never met M. Max Delormay, who seldom turned up for purposes of work until 10 o'clock P.M. He lifted his hat and thanked Horace with effusion for the trouble

the latter was going to take in defending him; but it did not seem as though the prospect of losing his liberty for a certain length of time weighed very heavily on his mind. M. Max D. was the cynosure of a small circle of admiring *confrères*, in whose eyes he had become a sort of oracle ever since he had been fortunate enough to drag his paper into a legal conflict. *Non cuivis contingit adire Corinthum:* it is not every journalist whose editor will give a chance of figuring in the Sixth Chamber. Monsieur Max was not unaware of this, and there was an expression of modest contentment on his features, as on those of a man who feels conscious that fortune is dealing kindly with him.

Nestor Roche took Horace by the arm and drew him aside.

"Max didn't mean any harm against that fellow Macrobe," he whispered; "he published the questions of a correspondent without knowing that they would stir up this shindy. However, mind and stick to the commercial-morality line of defence — and give it our adversaries hard.

We must make political capital out of the affair."

He said this simply, without excitement, and then turned to resume his talk about the Crimean battle. But in a few minutes an usher put his head out of the court and announced that the judges were coming in; which was a signal for witnesses to proceed to the waiting-room, and for the defendants with their counsel to go and take their seats. The crowd instantly made way to let Horace and his brother pass; the unmoved Nestor Roche and Max Delormay followed; and behind them came a lean and melancholy printer, who stood included in the indictment.

The solemn stillness of a court of justice, succeeding immediately to the noisy chattering of three or four dozen glib-tongued loungers, has something of the same effect as a bath of cold water in collecting the senses. Horace Gerold's head had been on the whirl all the morning—anxiety, impatience, and expectation all combining to make him restless and feverish. In the eyes

of most frequenters of the Palace it was a very ordinary press suit that was going to be tried to him the Sixth Chamber was a gambling-house, in which he was going to take his first throw with the dice. From ten till twelve he had been pacing up and down the Salle des Pas Perdus, rehearsing the main points of his speech with Emile, and stifling occasional qualms of nervousness by calling all his vanity and young ambition to his aid. A congratulatory shake of the hand or two from several of his friends, an encouraging nod and smile from one of the "great guns," who had said to him, "This is your maiden-speech day, isn't it, Gerold? I wish you success," and the flattering hums of "That's young Gerold." "That's the fellow who's going to defend the *Sentinelle*," which he had heard in the crowd outside the court, had been so many circumstances that had helped to buoy him up like corks in his small sea of glory. He did not regain complete and cool possession of his head until he found himself seated, with his brother to the right of him, Nestor Roche's

judgment to go by default. Your client, M. de Tirecruchon, is in court at this moment; if he does not stand forward and plead immediately, I shall request the Bench to have him arrested and put into the dock."

"Usher, let no one leave the court," cried the chief judge significantly.

The grinning stopped. The fat editor, looking slightly blue, was seen leaning over and conversing again with the red-faced barrister. The latter, no longer with his tongue in his cheek, then stood up and expostulated meekly: He knew that the prosecution would be perfectly justified in taking the course proposed, but he relied upon the well-known courtesy of Monsieur le Procureur Impérial, upon his generous indulgence, upon his universally acknowledged sense of justice, to grant just one more week's respite; and he looked piteously towards the pulpit.

Monsieur the Public Prosecutor having vindicated his importance, which was probably all he wanted to do, was graciously pleased to unbend before Maître Carotte's humility. He announced

that he withdrew his opposition for this once, but that such an act of condescension must not be taken as a precedent. Maître Carotte restored his tongue to its original position in his cheek. The chief judge made a second mark on the Cause List with his gold pencil-case, and, for the third time, the steel-trap snapped out: "The next case is Macrobe *versus* Roche, Delormay, and Dutison; action for libel; are the parties here?"

There was no immediate reply, for Maître Giboulet, the counsel for the plaintiff, being a great gun, had thought it incumbent upon his dignity to remain talking outside until he was being actually waited for. An usher had to go out and call him, and in a minute he came flustering in at the rate of eight miles an hour, mopping his brow with a cambric-handkerchief, and followed by a brace of juniors with bags. "I'm for the plaintiff, Mr. President," he shouted, lifting his square cap and planting it on his head again.

Horace Gerold stood up, and, as firmly as he could, said: "And I'm for the defendants."

"The case is opened," proclaimed the chief judge, and in another few seconds Maître Giboulet had started full gallop into his indictment.

As this is a record of the life and adventures of the two Gerolds, and not a chronicle destined to perpetuate the eloquence of the French Bar, it will be as well to make no more than a passing mention of all the fine things which Maître Giboulet said, and of all that part of the trial which included the examination of the plaintiff, defendants, and witnesses by the trap-voiced judge. To those who know how these things are managed in France it is quite needless to explain that Maître Giboulet, who was an Imperialist and an official member of the Legislature, animadverted with a great deal of warmth upon that base-born spirit of envy which attached itself to men who had rapidly attained wealth by dint of hard work and enterprise. Yet he did not rant, for he was a good orator—albeit the chief use to which he put his tongue in the Legislative Chamber was to cry "bravo! bravo!" when the Ministers spoke. He referred in a few feeling words to the spotless and industrious

career of his client, to the esteem in which he was held in all financial circles, "and also by his Majesty the Emperor himself, Mr. President, as you will see when he comes into court by the Ribbon of Honour on his breast." He then made a brief allusion to the newly founded *Société du Crédit Parisien*, which was to confer priceless boons upon humanity, and the shares of which were already at 300 francs' premium; and he concluded by a dignified protest against the licentiousness of the Press, and a prayer that justice would safeguard the sanctity of private life, and indemnify his client by heavy damages for a libel at once groundless, heartless, and malicious.

Maître Giboulet sat down, and a few of the money-men, who had crept in with borrowed plumes, mumbled "Très bien!" the begowned journalists retorting by crying "Hush!" and "Silence!" with great zeal, though with good humour. The cross-questioning of the defendants was then commenced by the presiding judge, who, being an old hand, conducted matters roundly and

with a rigid impartiality of which I will try and give an idea.

To Nestor Roche—"Stand up, sir: your name?"

Nestor Roche—"My profession is journalism; my address Rue Montmartre."

"Why do you libel honest men?"

"I never libelled an honest man."

"I beg, sir, you won't split straws with me. You have slandered an honest gentleman, a knight of the Legion of Honour, a director of one of the greatest financial companies in Paris; you can have had but one motive, that of sordid envy; and I advise you if you hope for the indulgence of the Court, to make an unreserved apology. On consulting the record of your antecedents, I find you have been imprisoned four times for Press offences: twice under the present reign, and twice under the last; you are evidently a danger to society. What have you to say for yourself?"

"That what you call a libel is a true statement. I . . ."

"Monsieur Roche, I cannot suffer you to

bring into court the slanders which you have already endeavoured to propagate through your journal. Your misdemeanor is aggravated by this display of effrontery. Stand down!"

The next to come up was M. Max Delormay. Now, M. Max had made up his mind to be very downright and cutting. This is what his resolution came to:—

"Monsieur Delormay, I find you are twenty-five, and the only son of a mother who has tried to bring you up as a respectable member of society. On coming to Paris five years ago, the kindness of Monsieur le Préfet de la Seine obtained for you an appointment as clerk at the Hôtel de Ville; but, last year, you left your place. Were you discharged for misconduct?"

M. Delormay (*hotly*).—"Certainly not. Who has dared to insinuate such a falsehood? I resigned because I earned only two thousand francs a year, and could gain more than double by my pen."

"Exactly. You preferred the disreputable gains to be had by libelling your betters to the modest salary obtainable by labour in an honour-

able career. Don't interrupt me, sir: I know what I'm saying. What business has a young man of your age to insult one superior to him in years, social position, and worth? It's a cowardly thing, do you hear, sir? But you may stand down. Your attitude sufficiently shows that I may appeal in vain to you for a spark of contrition and good feeling."

And so down went M. Max, looking very much as if he would like to say something, though too nonplussed to put that something into words.

Next came M. Dutison, the lean and melancholy printer, who observed, dolesomely, that seven daily newspapers and eight weekly ones were printed on his premises, and that, with the best intentions in the world, it was utterly beyond his powers to revise them all. He was disposed of in the following terms:—

"Monsieur Dutison, I informed you, when last you were here, that this excuse was shallow and frivolous. A printer should ponder over every line of manuscript before submitting it to

his presses. He should be the paternal censor of all the writings put into his hands."

"Yes, and see all his customers go and get their printing done elsewhere," ejaculated M. Dutison, with dismal irony.

"Sir, an honest printer would be consoled for the loss of custom by the possession of a blameless conscience."

M. Dutison seemed to consider this solace insufficient, and was sent back to his seat, with the gratifying assurance that, if he would only wait till by-and-by, he would see what would happen to him. The presiding judge then called the name of Prosper Macrobe, and the plaintiff was introduced, irreproachably dressed, be-gloved, smugly shaven, and looking the image incarnate of respectability. In the topmost button-hole of his frock-coat flashed a spick-span new piece of scarlet ribbon. He cast a quick glance round the room, leisurely drew off one of his black gloves, and, catching sight of Horace, nodded as amicably to him as if the two had been breakfasting together.

Wondrous was the transformation which the

features, voice, and manner of the presiding judge now underwent.

"Monsieur Macrobe, will you be so kind as to answer the usual questions as to name and profession? They are a mere formality."

And, saying this, the steel-trap became softened as though it had been oiled, whilst a deferential smirk irradiated the thin lips of the speaker.

Monsieur Macrobe evinced no objection to furnish all the explanations that were required of him. He briefly stated who he was, hinted that he was uncommonly rich, and hesitated for some polite term by which he could intimate that he cared not two brass stivers what was said about him. The judge was evidently unwilling to keep a man of such parts long on his legs, and, after a couple of totally insignificant questions, would have dismissed him; but Emile, whose usually placid face had been settling into the rigidity of contempt under the influence of this burlesque of justice, nudged his brother and whispered, "Up at him, and cross-question him."

Horace Gerold had been undergoing during ten

minutes a sort of wet-blanket infliction from the solicitor on his left, who, in despair at the youth of his client's advocate, repeated mistrustfully, yet with depressing persistency, "Mind and be prudent, Monsieur Gerold—mind and be prudent." At his brother's exhortation, Horace at once shook off this dotard, and, starting up, looked the plaintiff full in the face, and said, "Monsieur Macrobe, remember you are on your oath. Is it or is it not true that you have been thrice bankrupt? that you obtained a contract which——"

He could get no further. The blue-spectacled visage of Monsieur le Procureur Impérial leaped up in the pulpit like a jack-in-the-box, crying, "I protest!" The two minor judges, aghast with astonishment, exclaimed, "Order!" The presiding judge, quivering with the anger of outraged majesty, shouted, "Maître Gerold, I recall you to the respect you owe the court. You well know that it is against all rules for the Bar to interrogate a witness otherwise than through the Bench."

Poor Horace apologized. He had, indeed, for-

gotten this important rule. Reddening, and a little dashed, he resumed, "Will the Bench kindly ask the plaintiff whether——"

"I shall do no such thing, sir," broke in the chief judge, indignantly; and the Public Prosecutor, without any such expression of his opinion being called for, rose anew, and cried, "I move that the question is altogether out of place. The *Code* lays down that, in cases of libel, it shall not be allowable for the defendants to adduce proofs of their asseverations.* Besides," added the Procureur, with triumphant logic, "even if the defendants possessed the privilege, it would be of no use to them, for we are entirely convinced that their assertions are false."

"Precisely so," assented the chief judge; "the libel is false and malicious, and it is against all law that the defendants should seek to establish the contrary."

Emile turned pale with disgust, and bit his lips

* This law was repealed by the National Assembly in 1871; but only so far as libels against Government functionaries are concerned. A writer libelling a private person is still denied the right of proving that his libel is a truth.

savagely. As for Horace, the blood had flowed to his head; he made a couple of steps forward, and for half a moment it looked as if there was going to be a disturbance in court; but the cautious solicitor sprang up in terror, and pulled him back by the gown. "Oh! be prudent, M. Gerold—be prudent," said he. Horace turned with flashing eyes to Nestor Roche, who was seated behind him. "What am I to do?" he asked.

"Do nothing," answered the other, coolly. "Wait till it's your turn to speak, and then pitch in to everybody."

Horace sank into his place. The nonchalance of Nestor Roche discouraged him. Whilst his liberty was being weighed in the balances of Imperial justice, the Editor was unconcernedly writing a leading article in his note-book with an odd bit of pencil.

Neither of the parties desiring to call witnesses, the fluent Maître Giboulet at once set about delivering a second edition of his opening speech. He thanked the Bench for its impartiality; declared magnanimously that he bore no grudge

against his young friend and adversary, Maître Gerold, for having made an abortive attempt to envenom the discussion; and renewed his impressive yet temperate appeal for substantial damages. Everybody admitted that it was a very gentlemanlike speech. Maître Giboulet was succeeded by the Public Prosecutor. As this functionary is supposed to intervene on behalf of whichever party he may, after honest consideration, deem aggrieved, it was only natural that he should inveigh with splendid energy against the defendants. "For, indeed," said he, with honest wrath, "who is there among us that would not revolt at the idea of having all his past life disclosed? What hope is there for any honourable man, if papers are suffered to reveal all he said or did ten or twenty years ago? The press, gentlemen, is becoming each day more and more a danger; the landmarks of society must soon be swept away if it be not kept in check. M. Prosper Macrobe will leave the court with the warmest sympathies of all upright minds, whilst his libellers will be branded for ever with the stigma of indelible shame."

M. le Procureur was always overpoweringly eloquent in anathematizing periodical literature. It is surprising what a number of prints and journalists he had branded with the stigma of indelible shame.

And now came the important moment when Horace Gerold was to speak. The Public Prosecutor had imbedded himself anew in his pulpit, well content with his own oration, and after the usual amount of buzzing, foot-scraping, and coughing that succeeds the delivery of half-an-hour's speech, a deep hush pervaded the court. The defence is the episode *par excellence* of a press trial. In this instance, too, those who knew the name of the counsel were a little curious to see how the son of the Tribune Gerold would demean himself.

The beginning was not very promising. For the first time in his life, Horace experienced that disagreeable and totally indescribable sensation of perceiving every eye in a crowded room fixed on him. Till he opened his mouth, he would never have believed that he could so falter and stammer

and long that the floor might yawn and swallow him. He had counted on an easy triumph, for he was full of his subject; but on rising, and hearing the unearthly echo of his own single voice, and feeling beside him the leaden weight of his two arms, which he knew not how to lift or move, all his ideas seemed to go as clean out of his head as though they had been wiped away with a sponge. To add to his composure, the chief judge took the occasion of hinting that he hoped the speech would not be long, as there was really no defence possible.

It was Emile who saved his brother from premature collapse by whispering energetically, "Well said," "That's it," "Perfect," &c. By so doing he drew down on himself the sharp censure of the Bench; but his welcome excitations helped Horace to bridge over the first few moments of emotion, after which the horrible fear of breaking down and becoming ridiculous acted like a tonic and did the rest. The voice of the speaker, which had been running all wild, and scaling every note in the octave, from the husky

to the shrill falsetto, gathered firmness, and became controllable. Horace spoke spasmodically, but one by one his ideas returned. He kept his eyes fixed on those of a friend opposite him, whose changes of expression served him as beacons. Gradually he warmed to his subject; the trumps were all in his hand; arguments began to crowd upon him. A low murmur of approbation soon told him that he had struck upon the right path, and was making straight for the sympathies of his audience. The last remnant of nervousness forsook him. He spoke out flatly, plainly, fearlessly. The judges, who at first had thrown themselves back in their chairs, leaned forward and stared uneasily; the Public Prosecutor, who had affected to prepare himself for a quiet nap, glared from behind his blue spectacles as if he was getting more than he had bargained for. Encouraged, emboldened, Horace Gerold branched out from the main argument of his plea into an appeal of that kind which always finds an echo in Frenchmen, and which, in times of oppression, sets fire to them like tinder. He spoke

of lost liberties, and there was a thrill. The dullest can be eloquent on such a theme; and young Gerold, who was not a dullard, threw out the burning words with a fervour of earnestness that quickly stirred his hearers to the marrow. There are crowds whom it takes a great deal to move; next to nothing is required to animate a French crowd. It seemed to some of the spectators present as though in the excited young orator before them they saw the image of the rising generation standing forward to protest against the cowardice of its fathers, which had handed France over to slavery. A loud explosion of murmurs greeted an unwise attempt of the chief judge to check the speaker. The judge desisted, cowed; and from that moment the success of Horace Gerold was sealed. The arms no longer hung like lead now; they moved with the simple but magnificent gestures of scorn and defiance; the face was flushed, the hair thrown back; faster and faster fell the words, louder and braver grew the denunciations, until at last the speaker stopped amidst a tremendous uproar. Everybody in court had

risen; enthusiastic cries of "Bravo" shook the rafters; the three judges, on their feet, and livid with rage, were shouting, "You shall apologize!" Nestor Roche had rushed from out of his place and embraced Horace, kissing him on both cheeks French fashion; Emile, with tears streaming from his eyes, was wringing his brother's hand, and crying, "Well done, Horace; admirably spoken."

"You shall apologize," vociferated the Bench. "You said 'corrupt judges;' we will have an instant apology."

"Did I say 'corrupt judges?'" asked Horace, and indeed it was in perfect good faith he put the question, for he could not have told for the life of him what he had been saying.

"An instant apology!" roared the judges.

"An humble apology," yelped the Public Prosecutor.

Apologize at such a moment! Apologize when a score of hands were being stretched out to him, and tongues were repeating clamorously, "Bravo, bravo!" In a clear, ringing voice, Horace

replied, "I shall never retract. I said 'corrupt judges,' and I maintain the term."

The Public Prosecutor immediately cried, "Maître Gerold has been guilty of an outrageous contempt of court. I pray that the Bench will use its discretionary powers to punish him." There was no doubt about the contempt of court; the three judges caught up their caps, and swept out of the room by the door behind the dais to deliberate.

Impossible to describe the scene in court during their absence. Barristers, journalists, left their seats and scrambled over desks and forms, to cluster round Horace and shake hands with him. Half-an-hour before he had been a simple, struggling, and pretty nearly briefless advocate; now he was a hero. "Well said, indeed," "Your speech was inimitable," "You called the *coup-d'état* a crime; give me your hand; you're my friend." Such were a few amongst the hundred exclamations that rose like fusees from out of the transported throng. It was in vain that the ushers sought to impose

silence; they were bidden hold their peace, and jostled with ignominy—the noise was deafening. One must witness such a scene to realize it. In the midst of it all, as cool as a cucumber, M. Prosper Macrobe bustled forward, seized Horace's hand like the rest, and exclaimed, "My young friend, admiration knows no camp; splendid speech: always knew you'd make your way." At which the spectators around clapped their hands, thinking this was truly manly behaviour on the financier's part. M. Macrobe had quite relied upon this impression; that enterprising man never laid out anything save at interest.

At the end of twenty minutes the judges returned. Horace was perfectly aware that he was going to get his share of whatever penalty was in store, but this did not affect him in the least—neither, I fancy, did the other thought, that his fine speech had perhaps not done overmuch for his client's interest. There was no need to proclaim silence anew: the lull in the court was instantaneous. When the judges reached their place, one could have heard a gnat fly. The

chief judge held two written judgments in his hand. Still white with rage, and in a loud, rasping voice, he read out the first:

"*Whereas the newspaper* La Sentinelle *published in its number of the* 15*th April,* 1855, *a note beginning with the words,* '*We noticed in yesterday's* Moniteur,' *and ending with the words* '*a bonâ-fide enterprise;*' *and whereas the said note contains a wilful and malicious libel affecting the character and reputation of M. Prosper Macrobe;*

"*And whereas the said M. Prosper Macrobe never gave cause of just offence to the defendants, so that it is evident the libel can only proceed from a wanton spirit of mischief;*

"*And whereas the defendant, Max Delormay, wrote the note, knowing it to be libellous;*

"*And the defendant, Nestor Roche, editor, inserted it in the newspaper* La Sentinelle, *likewise knowing it to be libellous;*

"*And the defendant, Dutison, printer, rendered himself accessory to the misdemeanor by printing the said note:*

"*The Court,*

"*Conformably to the conclusions of the Public Prosecutor,*

"*Condemns*

"*Nestor Roche to six months' imprisonment, and a fine of five thousand francs;*

"*Max Delormay to six months' imprisonment, and a fine of five thousand francs;*

"*Dutison to two months' imprisonment, and a fine of two thousand francs;*

"*And the three defendants conjointly to pay five and twenty thousand francs damages to the plaintiff, together with all the costs of the trial.*"

Then came the second judgment:—

"*Whereas Maître Horace Gerold, advocate, practising at the Imperial Court of Paris, did on the —th day of April,* 1855, *speaking in the Court of Correctional Police, render himself guilty of a gross contempt of court, by uttering words reflecting on the honour of the Magistracy;*

"*And whereas the said Maître Gerold, on being summoned to retract his words and tender an apology, refused to do so;*

"*The Court,*

"Conformably to the conclusions of the Public Prosecutor, and by virtue of its discretionary powers,

"Condemns

"Maître Horace Gerold to be disbarred from pleading in any Court of the French Empire during a period of six months."

That evening Horace Gerold was the most talked-of man in all Paris.

CHAPTER VIII.

SWEETS AND BITTERS OF POPULARITY.

POPULARITY does not come or go by halves in Paris; it encircles or forsakes one with all the suddenness of a change of wind. Previously to Horace's sensation speech, the brothers had led very retired lives, paying few visits and being themselves little visited, save by one or two young barristers of their own age, who had been their companions during their student-days. On the morrow of the speech there was not a café in Paris, not a club-house, not a drawing-room where Horace Gerold was not the leading subject of conversation. For the moment, he supplanted Sebastopol, which the Allies were doing their very best to take, without succeeding.

It may seem strange that the maiden speech of

an unknown barrister should have been able to effect such a commotion; but stranger things than that used to happen in those days. Considered soberly, the speech was not a master-work. It failed a good deal in plain logic, and as a defence on behalf of accused men it was disastrous, for it had, without any doubt, caused the penalty of the defendants to be doubled. But Horace had had the striking merit of speaking out the truth flatly at a moment when scarcely anybody dared speak at all. Herein lay his success.

He was also helped a good deal into public favour by the fact that the judges had disbarred him for six months. To get one's clients sentenced to six months' imprisonment instead of three is well—it is like inserting the thin end of the wedge; but to get oneself disbarred into the bargain is splendid—it is like driving the wedge bodily in.

According to the courteous usage of a time when avowed Liberals were so few that they deemed themselves all friends, Horace Gerold received a congratulatory call from most of the

men of mark in Paris. Nineteen-twentieths of the members of the bar, pretty nearly every one of the students in the School of Law, and some three or four score Opposition journalists, left their cards upon him.* It was a singular procession, which lasted three days, to the mingled consternation and pride of M. Pochemolle—consternation, because the honest draper could not but wince at the sight of so much factiousness incarnate walking up his staircases; pride, because the good man worshipped success, and felt all the importance of possessing a lodger who was getting on so famously.

After the cards came the anonymous letters and the albums; the former mostly eulogistic and feminine (there must be women who have an uncommon amount of time to lose), the latter feminine also, and accompanied by notes praying M. Horace Gerold kindly to write a few verses,

* As an historical illustration of this graceful custom, it may be mentioned that, in 1867, after his very remarkable speech in the Senate in defence of free thought, the late Monsieur Sainte Beuve received no less than 12,300 cards. Liberalism was gathering strength then.

a sentiment, or anything in the world, provided only he signed his name to it. After this arrived the artist of a comic paper, who requested leave to pourtray Horace with a head three times bigger than his body. This was the *nec plus ultra*. When a gentleman asks permission to draw you with a big head you have reached the acme of celebrity: Fame can do nothing more for you.

We must not forget the bank-note of 500 francs, which Horace Gerold received as his *honorarium*. There had been no previous agreement as to fee, no allusion even to the subject; but on the day following the trial Nestor Roche sent his counsel a simple and affectionate letter, in which he said, "The usual way, my dear Horace, is for the solicitors to settle these affairs; but there had better be no formalism between you and me. I am just off to pay nine-and-thirty thousand francs into court—twelve thousand for fines, five-and-twenty thousand for damages, and two thousand for costs. I would pay the whole cheerfully enough, if I might forward it to you along with enclosed; but I confess it rather goes against my

heart to enrich the citizen Macrobe. However, I am not angling for sympathy; your speech has done a fine stroke of work for the *Sentinelle:* we sold twenty thousand copies more than usual this morning."

All this was the bright side of the picture, but there was also a dark side, or at least a side rather less agreeable. Horace was sitting in his study some two or three mornings after his triumph, when he was startled by a knock much more rapid and less ceremonious than visitors are accustomed to give. He was alone, Emile being absent at the law courts, and he had just finished a letter to his father, which was lying unfolded before him. On going to open the door it caused him some surprise to find Mdlle. Georgette.

"Oh, M. Horace," she said, blushing terribly, "I've run up to tell you that I think the police are coming to search your rooms."

"The police?" and Horace showed Mdlle. Georgette into his study, shutting the door behind her.

"Yes, yes," she continued, hurriedly; "ever

since you made your speech there have been two such curious men loafing on the pavement outside the house; great ugly men with big sticks. I believe they took down the names of most of the gentlemen who have called on you these last few days; and yesterday evening when you were out, you and M. Emile, they came in with M. Louchard, the commissary of police, and wanted to search your rooms; but papa wouldn't let them.

"What could they want to search our rooms for?"

"I don't know, M. Horace," answered Mdlle. Georgette, contemplating him half-naïvely, half in terror. "M. Louchard said you and M. Emile were dangers to the Government, and that he'd got his orders about you from the prefect; and when papa refused to let him have the key of your rooms during your absence, he said he'd come back to-day when you were at home, and made papa promise not to say about his having been here; but *I* didn't promise: for M. Louchard didn't know I heard him."

"It's very good of you to give me this warning, Mdlle. Georgette," said Horace, with a

look of gratitude; "but," added he, throwing a glance round the room, "I don't think the police can find anything dangerous here."

"Have you no letters from friends, no books against the Government," asked Mdlle. Georgette, with ready woman's wit.

Horace hesitated a moment, and then struck his forehead: "Dear me, what am I thinking of?" he cried; "thanks a hundred times for reminding me;" and he went to a book-shelf half filled with volumes of that uncomplimentary kind which the presses of Belgium used to send forth, and send forth still, in such numbers against the Emperor of the French. There were Belgian papers, too, brought by the brothers when they came into France—papers interdicted by the police, and the importation of which was punishable with fines and imprisonment. Horace spread a towel on the floor, laid all this anti-dynastic literature upon it, emptied a drawer-full of his father's letters on to the heap, and tied up the whole into a bundle. But when he had done this:—"And now, where am I to put it all," he said, rather helplessly?—

"We've no hiding-place that will be safe from M. Louchard."

"Give the bundle to me," replied Georgette looking at him. "I'll hide it in my room; they won't come and search there."

Horace fixed his eyes on the spirited girl, and said with a little wonder, "What have I done, Mdlle. Georgette, that you should act in so kindly a way towards me?"

"Why shouldn't I save you from getting into trouble if I can?" answered Georgette, in a would-be indifferent voice, with perhaps just the faintest tremor in it. She took up the bundle, and, without looking at him, added, "I must go now, M. Horace; good-by." And in another minute she was gone.

Horace Gerold did not at once move; he remained standing a few moments where he was, gazing at the spot on which Georgette had stood. Then he returned to his seat and slowly folded the letter he had been writing.

This simple operation must have taken him a long while, for he was still engaged in it when

a sharp rap at the outer door gave him to infer that the promised M. Louchard had arrived.

True enough. This time it was not a pair of bright hazel eyes and a pink, bashful face that met him; but three individuals buttoned up to the throat: the commissary and his two satellites, MM. Fouineux and Tournetrique of the Secret Police.

One must have lived in countries where the police is the despised, ever ready tool of a hated Government, to realize the ineffable look of disdain with which Horace Gerold received his visitors.

"I am a commissary of police——" began M. Louchard.

"That information is superfluous; your profession is written on your face," answered Horace, curtly. "I suppose you have come to ransack my rooms. Here are my keys: get your job done as soon as possible."

Even MM. Fouineux and Tournetrique, who were accustomed enough to be spat upon, looked a little sheepish at this greeting. Horace had not

given the keys into M. Louchard's hands, but thrown them on the floor for him to pick up. The commissary, who was a man of education, reddened.

The three followed Horace into his study. They kept their hats on; seeing which, the young man said peremptorily, "Take your hats off in my room." It was not the custom of the three honest gentlemen to uncover themselves when paying domiciliary visits; but the expression of Horace Gerold's features was not pleasant in moments of anger. The police hate fighting about trifles. They took their hats off.

Without thinking of what he was doing, Horace went to his desk to resume the operation of closing and sealing his letter, in which he had been twice interrupted. In a trice, M. Louchard was down upon him with a swoop, made a grab at the letter, and snatched it out of his hand. "I beg pardon: that's a letter," he said. "I must have all letters."

"Ah, to be sure," rejoined Horace, unconcernedly, and, throwing himself into an arm-chair,

he took up a newspaper, which he read, without paying any more attention to his guests.

It is the admirable privilege of all Frenchmen to be liable at any moment to a search visit, and to see all their papers fingered and confiscated. They have no right of appeal; no right, even, to know why their property is being violated. And the search is no mere formality. Messrs. Louchard, Fouineux, and Tournetrique remained above an hour ferreting in Horace Gerold's bed-room and study. They turned up the corners of the carpets, routed out the drawers and cupboards, probed the mattresses, pillows, and curtains, and made a parcel not only of such letters as they could find, but of every scrap of paper, however small, that bore a line of handwriting, tradesmen's bills not excepted. The object of a search is to obtain all the details possible as to the searchee's habits and acquaintances, and a tradesman's bill may be as instructive a document for this purpose as any other. There was a sheet of blotting-paper on which Horace had scribbled a list of a few friends who had sent him civil letters which needed

answering. Messrs. Louchard and Co. took that. There was a japanned bowl which served as receptacle for the thousand and odd visiting cards which Horace had received after his speech. The young barrister was, not unnaturally, proud of these friendly trophies, and had contemplated keeping them as mementoes. Monsieur Tournetrique shovelled them all into his pocket-handkerchief, tied the handkerchief into a knot, and dropped it into the tail-pocket of his coat.

Horace did not stir. Only, at the end of an hour, when the three representatives of justice and imperialism had inspected his own rooms, they were for going into Emile's. In order to do this they were obliged to pass Horace, whose chair was so situated that it blocked the door of communication between the two sets of apartments. On the first man presenting himself, Horace stood up and said: "Where are you going?"

"To search those other rooms," answered M. Louchard.

"Those rooms are my brother's," rejoined Horace quietly.

"Monsieur, we have orders to search your brother's rooms as well as yours."

"If my brother chooses to let you search his rooms I have nothing to say," was Horace's impassive reply, "but in his absence I am the defender of his property; no one goes in there whilst I am here."

"Do you mean to say you intend resisting by force?" asked M. Louchard, taken aback.

Horace caught up the fire-tongs that were lying close within his reach.

"Yes," he said calmly.

To do M. Louchard and consorts justice, it was not the fear of a broken head that made them pause. If Horace Gerold had been an ordinary rebel—a mere journalist for instance—the three would have fallen upon him together, knocked him down, handcuffed him, and bundled him off to the station in a cab to be charged with threatening to do grievous bodily harm to Government functionaries. But a barrister is an awkward adversary. The barristers form a powerful corporation, and if one of them were knocked down, the

Council of the Order, with the "Bâtonnier" at its head, would certainly insist upon reparation. M. Louchard was quite perspicuous enough to guess that this reparation would probably consist in his own dismissal. He thought it prudent to temporize.

"Monsieur, I am only doing my duty," he observed.

"And I mine," rejoined Horace; "but it is no use wasting further words. You have two courses open to you; either to wait until my brother returns, or to go and find him at the Palace of Justice and tell him that you want his help to turn his rooms upside down."

Monsieur Louchard did not smile at this joke; but he accepted the former of the two alternatives, after venturing upon one or two more remonstrances to which Horace did not even deign to give a reply. When Emile returned about a couple of hours afterwards, he found his brother composedly smoking a cigarette, with a pair of fire-tongs in his hand, and the three myrmidons of the law seated in a row opposite, looking at him.

On being told what was the matter, Emile threw down his keys as disdainfully as Horace had done. MM. Louchard, Fouineux, and Tournetrique thereupon resumed their search, repeating their conscientious investigation of beds, cupboards, and carpets, and making an abundant harvest of paper scraps as before. In Emile's rooms, however, occurred an episode which Horace had not foreseen; for, in exploring the top drawer on the left-hand side of the bureau, the detective Fouineux lighted upon the tin box which contained the title-deed of the Clairefontaine estates. Emile interposed, observing it was only a family document; but this was reason the more why M. Louchard should keep firm hold of it. Delighted to have got possession of something that looked valuable, the commissary took the box from his subaltern and expressed his determination not to part with it on any account.

"But what can you do with it?" cried Horace, more amused than angry; "I tell you it's only a title-deed."

At the word title-deed M. Louchard redoubled his

grip of the box, and resolved in his own deep mind that he had captured a prize. He set himself in the immediate vicinity of the door, ready to bolt if any attempt at snatching should be made; and in a quick voice directed his satellites to make haste and get done. This injunction had the effect of abridging the search by about half-an-hour. Less than ten minutes after the discovery of the box, the brothers were left alone, MM. Louchard, Fouineux, and Tournetrique having returned to the préfecture; where, amongst other things, they were mindful to state that Maître Horace Gerold was "a dangerous man of murderous propensity," an observation that was scrupulously recorded in that famous and mysterious ledger, in which are inscribed the names of all those who, at any time, and for any reason, have been brought under the notice of the French police.

This domiciliary visit was destined to have ulterior consequences that influenced in no slight degree the careers of the Gerolds; but the only immediate effect of it was to make the two brothers laugh, and to raise Horace a cubit higher

on his newly erected pedestal. The explorations of M. Louchard furnished a capital paragraph for *La Sentinelle;* the Liberals of the Boulevard waxed indignant; and the general opinion of the public was that this young barrister must be a very remarkable man, since the Government evinced such spite towards him. So true is it that despotism sets a halo upon those whom it tries to persecute.

Emile profited by his brother's triumphs. At the very moment when MM. Louchard, Fouineux, and Tournetrique were making hay amongst Horace's papers, the younger brother was being retained in three or four press-trials, at the Palace of Justice. These briefs would have fallen to Horace had he not been disbarred; but the journalists who retained Emile thought that he would no doubt follow in his brother's footsteps and make a sensation speech, perhaps even more violent than the other. In this, however, they were disappointed. When the first of the trials came on the court was crammed to bursting, and the defendants, whose paper had not been selling

very well of late, were building up soothing hopes on a rattling sentence of fine and imprisonment, which should quadruple their circulation and give them the *locus standi* of martyrs. But Emile's speech was so simple that it took everybody by surprise. There were no flights of oratory in it, no attempts at declamation, no allusions to the *coup-d'état*. It was a plain, lucid piece of argumentation, full of truth, admirably compact, and couched in language as unpretending as it was respectful. The judges did not acquit the prisoners —that, of course, was out of the question— but they were so much relieved that they only inflicted a month's imprisonment, without any fine at all; a result which transported the solicitors present, who at once marked down Emile Gerold for brief in the civil courts; but which not a little chagrined the journalists, who confided one to another their chagrined impression that Emile had not the same brilliant talent as his brother.

CHAPTER IX.

HORACE STARTS IN JOURNALISM.

It would be fair to suppose that after the pretty rough handling he had got from Nestor Roche's counsel, M. Macrobe would have renounced all further acquaintance with the Gerolds. But M. Macrobe's was a soul devoid of vindictiveness. Perfectly conversant with the fact that Horace Gerold was heir to a dukedom, and that he would some day inherit at least 500,000 francs a year, the financier had allowed himself to indulge in certain private schemes with regard to the young man, and he was not to be baulked of them for a few ugly words, more or less. It was a maxim with M. Macrobe that where there's a will there's a way, and *his* will was to become Horace Gerold's friend. How he was to profit by the friendship

when he had obtained it, and in what particular direction he was to work his schemes, were points upon which he had not altogether made up his mind, having never yet had the opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with either of the brothers. But, like a skilful angler who knows of a fish in a certain pond, which he will proceed to hook when he has the time, so M. Macrobe bore Horace Gerold in his mind, resolving that he would "land" him some day, and determined meanwhile to lose no opportunity of throwing out clever baits. Within a week of the trial the two MM. Gerold received a card from Madame Roderheim, wife of the partner in the firm Lecoq, Roderheim and Macrobe, inviting them to a *thé dansant.*

Now, if this card had come by post, or been deposited with the concierge by one of Madame Roderheim's plushed footmen, Horace and Emile, out of deference to their father's request that they should keep on amicable terms with MM. L. and R., would, on the appointed evening, have put themselves into dress clothes and have gone

through the civility, which consists in driving two miles to bow to a lady in a low-bodied dress, drink a cup of weak tea, and then drive home again. But, unfortunately, it was M. Isidore Macrobe who left the card (indeed, it was he who had especially asked it of Madame Roderheim), and this circumstance was not long in becoming known to Horace, to whom the missive was delivered by Mademoiselle Georgette, despatched by her father on this embassy.

Mademoiselle Georgette was very glad to be the bearer of the note. It was on the day following the visit of the commissary, and she was anxious to return the young barrister his parcel of contraband books and papers, which had lain hidden in one of her bonnet-boxes a day and a night. Perhaps she would not have been sorry even had she had no books to give back, but this thought was one that lurked too deep for human eyes, and one which she would have rejected with the utmost spirit, had any silent voice within ventured to whisper it to her.

With a slight flutter at the heart, due possibly

to the number of steps she had been climbing, and to the fear lest anybody should see her on the staircase with the suspicious bundle, Mademoiselle Georgette knocked as she had done the preceding day. It being about four, Horace was alone as before, but he was just preparing to go out. The young man would have found it difficult to explain why he coloured at the sight of the draper's daughter; but colour he did, and so did Mademoiselle Georgette.

"Here are your books, M. Horace, and a letter," she said.

She was going to retire after this, but Horace stopped her, saying, thankfully, "Do you know, Mademoiselle Georgette, I have been reflecting all night that you have rendered me a great service. If those books had been found here they might very well have furnished a pretext for indicting me as a Revolutionist. You have probably saved me from imprisonment."

She took no pains to hide the gleam of pleasure in her eyes, but answered with candour: "You thanked me yesterday. I am glad I have

been of use to you. But" (and here she looked up at him a little timidly) "why do you expose yourself to being imprisoned?"

"Oh, prison is not very dreadful," he answered smiling.

"Then the service I have rendered you is not so very great," rejoined she, biting her red lips and smiling in her turn.

"I mean," laughed Horace, embarrassed—"I mean that prison in our case doesn't mean iron chains and a straw bed. I was just going to see some prisoners when you came in; I daresay I shall find them comfortably enough lodged; but loss of liberty is always a hardship, Mademoiselle Georgette."

"I suppose you are going to see those gentlemen whom you defended," remarked Georgette, feeling some little curiosity on a subject so profoundly novel to her as the captivity of gentlemen connected with the Press. Mademoiselle Georgette was an occasional reader of the Official *Moniteur*, the only daily journal which M. Pochemolle deemed it consistent with his opinions to take in.

Horace nodded.

"I am going to Sainte Pélagie to see M. Roche and M. Delormay, who were to surrender to-day. Shall I tell them that you sympathize with their misfortune?"

"You may tell them so if you like," answered Mademoiselle Georgette, gravely; "though I think you would do better to tell them not to write any more against M. Macrobe. Why is it that all you gentlemen are so much against M. Macrobe?" she continued, yielding to the temptation of conversing for once with a person whose whole soul was not enwrapped in cloth and calico. "I thought he was a friend of yours, M. Horace."

"Not of mine, Mademoiselle Georgette; I know very little about him, and that little is not to his advantage."

"He has a very lovely daughter," observed Mademoiselle Georgette, gazing rather steadfastly at her interlocutor.

"So he has," replied Horace, recalling the fair hair and seraph-like expression of Mademoiselle Angélique; "but the daughter doesn't change the

father. He would be a bold man who married Mademoiselle Angélique and accepted any dowry with her."

These words did not seem to displease Georgette, but she replied generously: "Are you quite sure, M. Horace, as to all they say about M. Macrobe? Papa thinks so highly of him, for he is always very good to us. Though he lives right at the other end of the town now he comes to us whenever he wants to buy anything. He was here to-day and offered papa some shares in that new *Société du Crédit Parisien* which is making so much noise."

"Oh, M. Macrobe was here to-day, was he?" exclaimed Horace, interested.

"Why, yes; that letter comes from him; at least it was he who brought it."

Horace opened the letter with evident curiosity; but when he had inspected the contents he was amused, and said: "It appears to be your vocation to do me good turns, Mademoiselle Georgette; yesterday you saved me from prison, to-day you have kept me out of a trap."

"What trap?" asked Georgette innocently.

Horace was on the point of holding out his hand to Mademoiselle Georgette, but he checked himself and answered gently: "It would take too long to explain, and I don't think it would much interest you."

Georgette looked surprised, but she was beginning to reflect, that she had been talking long enough. She did not, however, return to the shop downstairs for another five minutes, and when she entered, her brother, M. Alcibiade Pochemolle (occupied in catching flies pending the receipt of custom) was the first to notice that she was a little pale, and held a parcel in her hands; which she at once went and showed her mother. This is how Mademoiselle Georgette came by the parcel.

Just as she was about to bring her interview with Horace Gerold to an end, the latter had opened a drawer and taken out of some silver paper a handsome work-box which he had bought the evening before. It was one of those admirable and expensive knicknacks such as are only to

be found in Paris—a thing of rosewood with silver-gilt corners and fittings, ivory silk-reels, satin lining, and golden thimble. To tell the truth the better part of Nestor Roche's 500-franc note had been bestowed on the purchase.

"I want you to accept this box, Mademoiselle Georgette, as a souvenir," said Horace, before the young girl had even divined his intention.

Georgette was so unprepared for the present that she turned first red, then white, and echoed in a pained tone: "A *souvenir?* Are you going away then?"

"No, I am not going away, but a hundred things may happen, and I should like you to accept this keepsake whilst the recollection of your thoughtful kindness of yesterday is still fresh with us both. Don't refuse," added he, seeing that Georgette looked hurt by his offer; "I shall tell Madame Pochemolle it is a gift in return for the number of letters you have had the trouble of bringing me, and if you refuse I will offer you the box in her presence." He said this gaily; but it was in a more serious tone

he repeated: "Accept it in the same spirit as it is offered, Mademoiselle Georgette; if you refuse I shall think you consider me guilty of impertinence."

"You would be wrong to think that," she murmured quietly; yet she still looked pained, and it was only after Horace had taken the box and gently forced it into her hands that, not to wound him, she consented to keep it. There was an incident that helped to silence her objections: It has been said that Horace's parcel of books had been hidden by Mademoiselle Georgette in a bonnet-box. There were a few artificial flowers lying in this box and one of them—a moss-rose-bud—had clung by its wire-stem to the folds of the towel in which the books were wrapped and been brought up, unnoticed by Georgette. Horace saw the rose, and, when he had placed the work-box in Georgette's hands, unfastened it and said: "May I, too, have my souvenir, Mademoiselle Georgette; will you let me keep this flower?" At this the look of pain vanished altogether from the young girl's face. She threw him a rapid look, loaded with gratitude and happiness and fled. But

her emotion had not yet disappeared when she returned downstairs and—as already chronicled—encountered the gaze of M. Alcibiade Pochemolle.

M. Pochemolle senior was delighted with the gift. There are drapers who might prick up their ears at hearing that their daughter had been presented with a costly workbox by a gentleman on the third floor; but M. Pochemolle was of the old school: he believed in social distinctions: and just as he would have deemed it presumption to think of marrying his daughter to any one above her sphere, so he had a sort of honest and chivalrous confidence that no man in Monsieur Gerold's position would ever trifle with the affections of his child. Madame Pochemolle, though not quite so humble in her matrimonial views respecting Mademoiselle Georgette, was also pleased with the present; she might have looked grave at a brooch or a locket, but a workbox was such a brotherly offering that it proved the purest motives on the part of the young barrister. As for M. Alcibiade, he was all enthusiasm, wondered what was the price of the box, and would have been greatly

astonished had he heard that his sister had ever refused such a gift. M. Alcibiade was of the new school of tradesmen.

"Georgette, my child," said M. Pochemolle, "we must make M. Horace some return for this. It is a pity that young gentleman is a republican, but he has the courtesy and gallantry of a Count. Let me see; what can we do for him? Ha, I have it: Alcibiade, measure your sister four yards of the finest lawn, Cambrai mark, and she shall inaugurate her box by hemming M. Horace a dozen pair of bands to wear in court. Meantime, give me my hat and gloves: I must go and offer my dutiful thanks to our lodger."

And the thanks of M. Pochemolle were all that could be desired. He met Horace Gerold on the staircase and made him a bow such as would not have disgraced that famous lace-purveyor of the Prince of Condé, who was said to bow better than the Prince himself. And the same hour Mademoiselle Georgette set to work upon the cambric bands, cutting and stitching with a diligence that somewhat surprised M. Alcibiade,

who remembered that his sister never worked so fast when she had to hem any of his pocket-handkerchiefs.

Now, are we to conclude from this gift of a work-box that Horace Gerold, the heir of the Hautbourgs, or, what is more to the purpose, the rising pleader already renowned in Paris for his good looks, his good luck, and his eloquence, entertained any deeper feeling towards the draper's daughter than the parents of that young lady suspected? Maidens of Mademoiselle Georgette's age are apt to imagine that every soft word, playful smile, and kind glance are so many indications of attachment, and poor Georgette, as she hemmed the cambric bands, doubtless built many a fancy mansion that would have crumbled into dust could she have witnessed the extremely leisurely gait and placid air of M. Horace as he went on his way to visit his friends at Ste. Pélagie. Lovers do not wear the expression that Horace Gerold wore. He trod the pavement like a man who is exempt from cares of every sort, whose blood flows cheerily in his veins and who

would not change his present lot for a kingdom. Well-a-day, how far he was from thinking of Clairefontaine now, and what a good joke he would have considered it, had any long-headed soothsayer lifted the veil of the future and shown him . . . . but why anticipate? let us follow the young man on his visit to the prison.

Sainte Pélagie is a fine grey building, devoted, like the Sixth Chamber of Correctional Police, half-and-half to the accommodation of thieves and of journalists; the thieves occupy the back part, the journalists the front. Let us be just, however, towards the Imperial Government:—When a journalist was sentenced in the courts of the Empire, he was not laid hold of there and then in the dock, and carted off to bondage in a van, as is done in certain freer countries. He was left to surrender pretty much when he pleased (save in very exceptional cases). He might take a fortnight, or a month; sometimes he took three months; and when he at last made up his mind to go and be locked up, he drove to his destination in a cab, bearing his boxes, portmanteaus,

and writing materials with him, and leaving word with his friends to come and call upon him, just as if he was off for a hydropathic establishment, and was merely about to undergo a few months' cure.

Of course the Government was not bound to make things thus pleasant, and occasionally, when sulkily disposed, it would order that such and such a captive journalist be rendered as miserable as possible by being debarred from all intercourse with the outer world. But such instances of waspishness were not common. It was always borne in mind that the imprisoned writer of to-day may be the cabinet minister of to-morrow: journalism being a career that leads to anything—provided you abandon it.

Horace Gerold's purpose in visiting Sainte Pélagie was two-fold: in the first place he had a duty of common courtesy to perform, and in the next, being thrown out of work by his six months' interdiction, he wished to ask for employment on the staff of the *Sentinelle*. He found Nestor Roche installed in a room that looked much more

like an apartment in a middle-class boarding-house than a cell in a prison. It was tolerably large, the walls were papered, there was a carpet on the floor, and two workmen were engaged in nailing up a book-case, which Roche had obtained permission to bring with him, as well as a bureau, a couple of easy-chairs, an enormous ottoman, and a shower-bath. On a peg above a small camp bedstead hung the monumental hat of the captive, which at once arrested the eye like the helmet of a cloistered knight; and the captive himself was seated at a table smoking a meerschaum pipe and correcting a proof, whilst a printer's devil, his legs tucked up on the bar of a chair, was waiting to carry the said proof to the printing-office.

"*Salve, puer,*" exclaimed Roche, holding out his hand, "I shall have done in a minute. Meanwhile, you'll find Delormay at home; he's next door."

M. Max Delormay had not arrived above an hour and was standing in his shirt-sleeves amidst a litter of portmanteaus and carpet-bags, from which he was extracting bottles of eau-de-cologne, hair-

brushes, pots of pomatum, razor-strops, and the adjuncts of a well-furnished toilet-table. M. Max felt deeply grateful to Horace Gerold for having secured him six months' imprisonment. Ever since his sentence, the value of his signature as a writer had risen considerably in the literary market. A whole collection of articles, tales, and sketches, of which he had been utterly unable to dispose in the days of his freedom, had passed triumphantly into the columns of various broad-sheets the moment he had become a martyr. Moreover, he had obtained promotion on the staff of the *Sentinelle*, having been raised from the note and paragraph department to that of leader-writing. Encouraged by these results, M. Max felt equal to facing any amount of persecution for the truth's sake. He shook Horace warmly by the hand, planted him in a chair, and offered him a cigar.

"You'll stay and dine with us, I hope? We make up a capital mess: Roche and I, two writers of the *Siècle*, Jules Tartine of the *Gazette des Boulevards*, and three members of a Secret Society

who are in here for two months more; the famous Albi's one of them. We're to mess in Roche's room, dinner from the restaurant over the way, one franc fifty centimes a head. Here, you, my friend, just cut downstairs to the canteen and get us a pint of cognac, two lemons, some sugar, and a jug of hot water; catch hold of the money."

This order was addressed to what appeared a workman, who was putting M. Max's clothes into a chest of drawers. Like the two workmen in Nestor Roche's room, he was attired in grey garments, and wore his hair cropped close to his head.

"Most intelligent man," remarked Max Delormay, when his attendant had vanished. "The Government, you know, gives us some of our fellow-prisoners from the other part of the building to wait upon us. We have one between three. They are chosen for their good behaviour. I daresay you saw those in Roche's room. One's in, I believe, for spoiling the good looks of a policeman; the other for putting stones through the window of a publican who refused

him credit. This one of mine used to make mistakes in computing the change to which his fares were entitled, and then molest them when they objected. He was a cab-driver, and means to reform when he gets out."

The cabman who made mistakes returned with the cognac, lemons, &c., and declared himself competent to brew "*un grog*," if need were. Soon after, the voice of Nestor Roche was heard shouting, "I've finished now," and M. Max accompanied Horace into the other room, each bearing their share of the refreshments. The printer's devil, a boy with one eye (but what a perspicuous one was that single orbit!), had slid off his chair, and was receiving directions not to loiter with the proof by the wayside. He snivelled as he listened, and, I regret to state, more than once made use of his sleeve in guise of pocket-handkerchief.

"Have you any copy, M'sieu Delormay?" inquired he, upon the entrance of this gentleman.

M. Max had no copy; but he laid a hand on the shaggy poll of the small Cyclops, and bade him tell his name to Horace Gerold.

The boy fixed his one eye on Horace, and answered sturdily, "My name's Tripou, but they calls me Trigger."

"And now tell M. Gerold why they call you Trigger."

"They calls me Trigger," answered the young Tripou, with pride, "because in '51, when there was the fighting, and I was seven years old, I prigged the gun of a sentry at the Louvre when he wasn't looking, and shot him through the head with it."

"Good lad!" exclaimed M. Max, dismissing him. "You'll grow up to be a valuable citizen," —an assurance which encouraged Trigger to add, for the enlightenment of the stranger, "The gun kicked, and that's how I lost my eye."

The presence of two gentlemen in grey proving an impediment to confidential intercourse, nothing was done but grog-sipping and cloud-blowing for a quarter of an hour or so; but when the book-case had been nailed up, the shower-bath established in its corner, and the ottoman wheeled near the fireplace, the gentlemen in grey vanished,

and then Horace plunged at once *in medias res* by saying, "I've come to ask you to take me on your staff, M. Roche."

"H'm," grunted the editor, from out of a curling wreath of shag-smoke. "Does our condition seem so delightful as to tempt you to become one of us?"

"If you think me good enough," was Horace's modest reply.

"You'd be good enough in any case," answered the editor, shaking the ashes off his pipe. "You've made yourself a name, and the public'll read anything you write. Only, I'll tell you what, journalism's not the easy thing you may think."

Max Delormay confirmed this statement by ejaculating with feeling that he had often sat up a whole night elaborating notes which wouldn't be coaxed out of his head—a reminiscence which evidently gave him a very sublime estimate of the difficulties of literature.

"Yes, but I didn't mean that," rejoined Nestor Roche mildly; "what I mean is, that there are

two kinds of journalism—one for which any man who can spell is fit enough; and the other, the real journalism, which sucks in its man like a whirlpool. Those among us who take a liking to our craft don't leave it; our pens stick to our fingers, and there we sit scribbling until brain-fever grabs us, which it generally does, in the long run. I don't want to deter you from following your own bent, but I warn you of this, that if you once take to printer's-ink you'll soon be throwing off your gown. It's easier to write articles than to read up briefs and make speeches; it's pleasanter work too, but after a time it squeezes your brain as flat as a sucked orange. Yes, I know what you were going to say," proceeded the editor, observing that Horace was preparing to reply. "You were going to cite half-a-dozen journalists who have been at work close upon fifty years, and who write leaders as much as ever. Yes, but just read those leaders: they are washed-out copies of others written long before you were born: the authors of them take it easy: they have given up fabricating new thoughts, they

say the same things over and over again, they are like those looms that throw off mechanically a piece of cotton of the same length, breadth, colour, and texture every day. And mind, it needs a certain merit in its way to be able to do that. It requires a good, thick, solid head that goes 'thud' when you rap it, and doesn't contain two straws' worth of enthusiasm or conviction. Those men have no passion for their work; their blood flows coolly and evenly through their veins like the waters of the St. Martin's Canal; journalism with them is not a calling, it is a trade; they take to it in the same spirit as they would have taken to boot-making had they been born a few steps lower down the ladder. But you, Horace Gerold, will never make one of this band. If I am any judge of your character, you will throw yourself into your work with all your might—ambition, vanity, conviction, and talent all pushing you together; and so sure as ever you throw yourself into journalism it will use you up—unless indeed," added the editor, rather gloomily—"unless it leads you to a prefecture or a seat in the

Cabinet—but I don't see much chance of that, for you are not of the stuff of which nature makes renegades, and I am not very sanguine as to our having a Republic whilst you and I are on earth to enjoy it."

"Why not?" asked Max Delormay, astonished at this dispiriting prediction.

"Because we are a nation of parrots, Max," rejoined Nestor Roche, laying down his pipe.

It was not often that the editor indulged in such long speeches; he was habitually curt in his dialogues, and seldom went the length of developing his views. But his esteem for his old friend Manuel Gerold was so great that he treated Horace and Emile to a share of it, and spoke more at length with them than he did with anybody, save his wife and his niece, who kept his house for him.

Horace answered, without much hesitation, "I never thought of taking to journalism as a profession. All I want is employment to keep me from rusting until I can go into court again."

"Dangerous," muttered the editor. "I took

to journalism five-and-thirty years ago, waiting until I could pick up a practice as a doctor, and I have been at it ever since. But you shall have your way; the *Sentinelle* is open to you; write me leaders, or articles, or anything else you like; only, in six months from this, I shall remind you of what you've just said, and expect you to drop the pen: for you can't drive two trades together."

A few minutes later Nestor Roche drew a pencil from his pocket, and said, "Listen: this is just the position of the *Sentinelle* at the present moment: We are selling 40,000 a day ever since the trial; at three sous a copy, that makes 5,600 francs a day; deduct 6 centimes per copy for the stamp-duty, and there remains 3,200 francs. Expenses of printing are 1,300 francs; publishing and remittances to agents, 800 francs; carriage, 400 francs. This leaves us 700 francs, to which we may add another 800 from advertisements. Out of this 1,500 you must subtract again 750 as payments to the staff, and the remaining 750 may be said to constitute the profits, which are supposed

to be divided equally between my partner and me. To my partner, however, who is a money man, I pay over and above his share in the profits the sum of 5,000 francs a year, being the interest on the 50,000 francs he was obliged to deposit in the Treasury as caution-money when we started the paper; moreover, it is I who must meet such liabilities as may spring up in the way of fines and damages; for instance, the nine-and-thirty thousand francs of the other day. This statement will show you that the *Sentinelle* is at present a paying concern; but you must remember, on the other hand, that the normal circulation is not 40,000, but 20,000, and that, as the *Sentinelle* has already received two '*admonitions*' from Government, it may, on its next offence, be suspended for two months, and after that be suppressed altogether, in which last event I am bound by treaty to pay my partner 100,000 francs. Do you follow?"

"Yes," answered Horace, a little surprised.

"Well, then," said the editor, shutting up his pencil-case and relapsing into briefness, "you

won't make any mistakes as to my reasons if I sometimes cut down your articles until there's nothing left of them but the paring. Supposing the *Sentinelle* were suppressed I should be as good as ruined; but, what is infinitely more serious, there would be a liberal organ the less in Paris: for, as you are aware, it needs a special licence from Government to start a new paper, and that licence the Government would refuse."

"Cut down my articles as much as you please," answered Horace, smiling. "You may be sure I shall respect your reasons."

Upon this understanding the young barrister temporarily joined the staff of the *Sentinelle*, and wrote his first leader the same evening.

CHAPTER X.

NEW FRIENDS, NEW HABITS.

A BARRISTER may go into society or not as he pleases, and perhaps the less he goes the better for his professional work; but with a political journalist the case is just the opposite. Before long, Horace Gerold found himself thrown into daily intercourse with a number of personages whom, hitherto, he had only considered from afar: eminent liberals for the most part, and leaders of the party, whose organ the *Sentinelle* was. These gentlemen represented a considerable variety of shades in opinion and, under a freer form of government, would have been pretty certain to detest one another cordially. But one of the beauties of despotism is that, like fox-hunting, "it brings parties together as wouldn't otherwise

meet," and Legitimists, Orleanists, and Republicans formed in those days one happy family, coalesced in common hatred of the reigning dynasty.

As, owing to the law which prohibited the founding of political newspapers without special licence from Government, the number of opposition prints was extremely limited, some honour attached to being on the staff of an independent journal. It was something like belonging to a crack club. All the members of the independent press hung very much together, maintaining a sort of freemasonry, and holding carefully aloof from the writers of the semi-official or Government press, whom they despised as little better than hired menials. Naturally, the Bonapartist writers resented this contempt, and affected to reciprocate it, and this kept up a feud which evinced itself in little things, such as frequenting different cafés, walking on opposite sides of the Boulevards, and adopting dissimilar slangs. In 1855, the favourite café of the opposition press was the Café des Variétés, that of Government journalists the Café

des Princes on the other side of the way. It should be added that the face-to-face situation of these rival establishments not unfrequently led to unpleasantnesses, such as meetings in the middle of the road between foes crossing from one pavement to the other; and so sure as ever this happened, there was either a treading on toes, or a jostling of elbows or something to necessitate an exchange of cards, perhaps an exchange of slaps on the face, and on the morrow an encounter at daybreak. Those were times when MM. Grisier and Pons, the fencing-masters, had a rare number of pupils in the literary profession. Horace was cordially received at the Café des Variétés the first time he appeared there at the "hour of absinthe," *i. e.* 5 P. M., on the arm of a M. Hector Tampon, sub-editor of the *Sentinelle*. Preceded by his quickly-won reputation, he was hailed as a valuable recruit. Nobody asked whether he wrote well—that, in the opinion of journalists, was a secondary consideration—but he thought well: he seemed to hate the Government well, and that was enough.

M. de Tirecruchon, the stout editor of the *Gazette des Boulevards*, whom he had already seen once in the Correctional Court on the occasion of the Macrobe trial, held out his hand and shouted with a bluffness which at first surprised him: "Welcome, M. Gerold. You're quite right to try the press. I predict you'll make your way in it."

"Oh, I'm only a visitor," answered Horace modestly: "the *Sentinelle* has taken me in like a passenger on a cruise."

"Tut, tut! When passengers like you come on board they don't go off again in a hurry. It's ten times pleasanter writing leading articles than cramming briefs, and so you'll find when you've had time to compare. If you leave the *Sentinelle* give me the preference; my columns are open to you." M. de Tirecruchon here drew an immense flat cigar from a Russian-leather case, and wreathed his solid face in smoke. "I'm a Legitimist," he continued, "but it doesn't matter, for it's Liberty Hall in my paper; all my contributors are free to write as they please. Do you see that small man yonder, sucking iced-punch through a straw? he's

my sub-editor, a Red Republican like yourself, opposed to luxuries, and all that sort of thing. Take a seat. I'm going to prison next week, at least, as soon as Number 9 at Ste. Pélagie is vacant. I was sentenced yesterday, but I like being always in my old quarters, so that when I heard Number 9 was tenanted—(I look upon Number 9 as almost mine, for I've been there five times, and always leave a carpet-bag and a few shirts there,)—I asked the Public Prosecutor not to make out the commitment until it was vacant again. Very civil fellow, the Public Prosecutor. He'll do anything for you if you treat him properly; I called on him in dress clothes and a white tie, and that touched him.—I see you smoke cigarettes; they're too weak for me; try one of these *panatellas*. I suppose you've made it up by this time with Macrobe. Uncommonly clever fellow, and gives capital dinners at that new place of his in the Champs Elysées. His daughter's one of the prettiest girls I've ever seen. You let fly pretty hard at the Crédit Parisien the other day, but it's a splendid concern upon my word;

and if you've any spare cash I advise you to invest in it. I've done so. Nominal value of shares 500 francs, issued at 360; they're selling now at 800, and rising steadily. That man Macrobe is a genius."

Thus M. de Tirecruchon. Horace had expected a little more austerity from men who gave themselves out as the defenders of public morals, the champions of might against right, the victims of oppression, &c.; but he soon discovered that liberal opinions and a good-natured tolerance of successful capitalists go very well hand in hand. Even the Red Republican who was sucking iced-punch through a straw, admitted that there were few things like the shares of the Crédit Parisien, and that though he despised riches he had bought two dozen of them. Excessive strait-lacing was out of fashion at the Café des Variétés, and it was only in his own editor, Nestor Roche, whose rugged soul was all of a piece, that Horace found that uncompromising sternness of principle which he had been disposed to think was inseparable from republicanism.

It was his habit to go and call upon Nestor Roche every day with either a leader or some occasional notes; and these visits afforded him the opportunity of learning what a real talent there lies in careful editing. Nestor Roche was not a man of many words, and the few he uttered were apt to mislead those who would have taken them as an earnest of the man's secret thoughts. In conversation he seemed indifferent and sceptical; in reality he was imbued to the marrow with theories of his own, and cherished, with a child-like veneration, the political creed in which he had been educated. This became, to a certain extent, apparent when he corrected the articles of his younger contributors; for, without appearing to do it designedly, he would, by a word inserted or expunged here and there, alter the whole tone of passages which jarred on any of his favourite chords. Men seldom make very good journalists until thirty, and Horace's writings profited considerably by the searching discipline to which they were subjected. They left the editor's hands strengthened and furbished, and yet the correc-

tions were so few, that the most susceptible of literary vanities would not have found a pretext for taking umbrage. Horace was often astonished at the fine figure his own articles cut in print, and even wondered slightly at his own talent. Amongst his brother journalists too, it soon came to be remarked that young Horace Gerold was an elegant and thoughtful writer. The truth was, he wrote neither better nor worse than most intelligent young men of four-and-twenty, and so the public would have judged had his compositions passed straight out of his own hands into those of the printer.

Invitations and civilities began to flow in apace. Society does not run after those who shun it, but it soon adopts those who make any advances. From mixing with journalists at the café and elsewhere, it was not long before Horace was solicited to dine with them at their homes and meet their wives or connections. Then came introductions to eminent statesmen who had held high office under former governments and deemed it politic to surround themselves with the rising

men of the press and the bar, with a view to a possible return to power in the future. There were also nobles of the Faubourg St. Germain, who, to cement the coalition of all parties against the Usurper, filled their drawing-rooms once or twice a month with human salads concocted of all the prominent elements then in Opposition.

Horace was everywhere received pretty much as a budding hero. His good looks, his literary and oratorical merits—(recommendations always powerful in France)—would alone have sufficed to open many doors to him; but the interest he inspired was heightened by the mystery in which he enshrouded his real name and distinguished birth. At the Café des Variétés few knew or cared whether he was a nobleman or not; but it was very different in society where there were ladies. A little to his vexation, although that vexation was not unmingled with a small dose of incipient complacency, Horace Gerold discovered that his titles were a secret for nobody, and that the fact of his repudiating them as he did was accounted to him for stoicism and abnegation beyond the common.

In fact he would never have suspected how hard it was not to wear one's coronet had not people marvelled more than once, when they thought him out of ear-shot, that any young man should prefer such a name as Gerold to that of Claire-fontaine.

One evening after he had heard himself addressed as M. le Marquis five or six times by different persons in the course of an hour, he turned rather impatiently to the lady with whom he was conversing, and said, "Why do people insist upon labelling one with these absurd titles?"

This was at a rout given in the hospitable mansion of a very famous man—none other than the small and eloquent M. Tiré, who had been Prime Minister under Louis Philippe, and had helped not a little, by the way, in bringing the dynasty he loved to grief. The lady in conversation with Horace was an extremely pretty Baroness de Margauld, wife of an Orleanist banker.

"Why do you call titles absurd?" she replied. "I wear mine bravely enough, and should be sorry not to possess it."

"I don't mean that they are absurd for everybody," he answered, blushing; "though even in your case, Madame, I might well say, of what use is a title to you? But it is absurd to inflict upon me a distinction which I do not choose to bear."

"You must blame your own friends for that," said the Baroness, with a little tinge of slyness. "If they *will* sound your trumpet so loudly, you must expect people to do you honour."

"What friends, what trumpet?" inquired Horace, with innocence.

"Oh, you have so many friends, M. Gerold; but to cite only one instance, there is M. Macrobe, who misses no occasion of praising your good qualities; he was talking to my husband, only this morning, of your high principles and your generosity,"

"M. Macrobe my friend!" exclaimed Horace, sceptically; "why, he is the man against whom I pleaded the other day."

"I am certain he bears you no ill-will, then," rejoined the Baroness, "but why *did* you plead

against him? Surely you do not believe all the wicked stories that have been circulated against him?"

"I neither believe, nor disbelieve," answered Horace, "but it seems to me that people judge M. Macrobe much more leniently than they would if he had failed in his curious speculations instead of enriching himself as he had done."

The Baroness gave a pretty little shrug.

"Is not success the best touchstone of merit; I believe, for my part, it is the touchstone of honesty too."

"Of honesty!" echoed Horace with surprise.

"Yes, my confessor says so. He asserts that Heaven would not allow bad men to prosper, and that consequently when we see a man very wealthy and successful, we may be sure he has deserved his good fortune, however much his enemies may say to the contrary."

"Truly a convenient moralist," observed Horace, smiling; "a sort of man to consult when one's conscience is in trouble."

"Yes, he is indeed," answered the Baroness,

naïvely; "you should know him. His name is Father Glabre, of the Society of Jesus."

"I guessed the Society of Jesus," responded Horace, "and I suppose Father Glabre exemplifies his principles by being a Bonapartist. He must regard the success of the *coup-d'état* as the divine consecration of Napoleon."

"Father Glabre never talks politics," answered Mdme. de Margauld. "He says that one of the Apostles enjoined us to submit ourselves to the powers that be. And, after all, what does it matter who is King or Emperor?" added she, fixing her bright eyes on the young man; "life was not given us to spend in wrangling as to who should sit in a velvet arm-chair. Why cannot we put up with the government we have, and try and make the best of it, it would be so much pleasanter."

Horace had too much tact to wage a war of opinions with a lady, but he said gaily, "All I wonder at, Madame, is that, holding these views, you should risk facing such a sturdy anti-imperialist as our host."

"Oh, I come here because of the nice people one meets," answered the Baroness, playing with her fan. "If one desires to see men of any real worth in art, or literature, or politics, one must look for them in Opposition drawing-rooms. It has been the great mistake of the Emperor that instead of calling to him all the men who had rendered themselves illustrious under past reigns, he has made himself a court with a crowd of persons whom nobody knows. It's a pity, for I adore talent, and think that a sovereign cannot have too many distinguished men about him."

"I daresay he had no choice," muttered Horace, a little dryly. "Doubtless he would have been glad enough to fill his court with distinguished men, if distinguished men had consented to be employed for that purpose."

"Then you believe it is the men of talent who are holding aloof from *him*."

"Why, assuredly, Madame; have we not the proof in M. Tiré himself?"

"How good it is to be young and to have all one's illusions," murmured she, with arch

but not unsympathizing raillery at the young man. "Do you not see, M. Gerold, that what has so angered all our great friends is, that they have been played? Their vanity is stung. They deemed it impossible that a stable government could ever be established without their help, and the way in which the Emperor has dispensed with their assistance, has been like telling them of what small account they were in the land. Our host, M. Tiré, is a charming man, but as vain as they say we women are. He thought himself necessary, and the Emperor has obliged him to drink gall. Depend upon it, if he were offered place to-morrow, he would accept, and with alacrity. He would consider such an offer an avowal of weakness; it would soothe his ruffled self-love; and self-love always goes before principle."

"You take a dark view of human nature," said Horace, rather moodily.

"I take the same view of it as you will when you have been ten years in society like me," replied Madame de Margauld, with half a

sigh. "You are a rising man, M. Gerold. If you aspire to lead your contemporaries you must not estimate them above their worth."

The same night, going home, Horace revolved these last words in his mind with a dawning and discomforting conviction, that a society which condoned the shortcomings of such people as M. Macrobe, for the sake of the gold they possessed, did not deserve to be esteemed very highly. Somehow, though, he felt that his own contempt for the capitalist was lessening. Suspect and dislike a man as we will, we can seldom be totally indifferent to his repaying our ill-feelings by going about and speaking well of us.

It was long past midnight when Horace reached his lodging, and he walked quietly in on tiptoe for fear of awaking his brother. Something like a pang went through his heart on thinking of Emile. The two brothers were seeing less and less of each other every day. Since Horace had taken to journalism their ways lay apart. They no longer breakfasted and dined together at the modest *table-d'hôte*. Horace frequented the

restaurants of the Boulevards Montmartre and Des Italiens; he rarely got up before ten in the morning; spent his evenings either out at parties or at the theatre, and when he returned home towards the small hours, usually found Emile in bed. On this occasion, however, the younger brother was still up, at his desk, writing.

Horace crept in softly behind him and put an arm round his neck: "Working so late, old fellow?" he said kindly.

"Yes, Horace," answered Emile, squeezing his hand. He pointed to two or three parcels of papers tied with pink tape, and added, "I have been entrusted with a brief that requires some study."

This was putting the case very mildly, for ever since that *début*, in which he had disappointed the hopes of the unprofessional public, but won golden opinions from the solicitors, Emile had been entrusted with several briefs, all most arid, voluminous, and tough. Solicitors were delighted to find a young man who was devoid of vanity, and had no ambition to make himself a name at

the expense of his clients. Briefs were offered him which were not important enough for the stars of the profession, but which demanded an immense amount of reading, and required to be handled by a man of talent, content to work hard with small prospect of glory, and, often, for not very high remuneration. Barristers of this kidney are scarce in all lands, but in France, perhaps, more so than elsewhere. Whence it happened that Emile was getting as much employment as he could manage.

He was looking pale, however, so that, after they had talked a little while together, Horace prevailed upon him to go to bed. They wished each other affectionately good-night; but before retiring to his own room, Horace passed into his study to see if there were any letters. There were several, chiefly invitations, and in the midst of the heap a little packet fastened with blue ribbons.

"From whom does this come?" said he, returning to his brother's room with the parcel opened, and displaying a dozen cambric bands and

as many pocket-handkerchiefs, exquisitely embroidered with his initials.

"Oh! I forgot to tell you," exclaimed Emile, already in bed, and raising himself on his elbow; "they were brought up to-day by our landlord's daughter, in return for a work-box which she says you gave her."

"Kind little Georgette!" ejaculated Horace.

"She seems an amiable girl," continued Emile; "but I met her father to-day in the street, and he tells me that she is growing serious and silent, and doesn't look well."

END OF VOL. I.

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